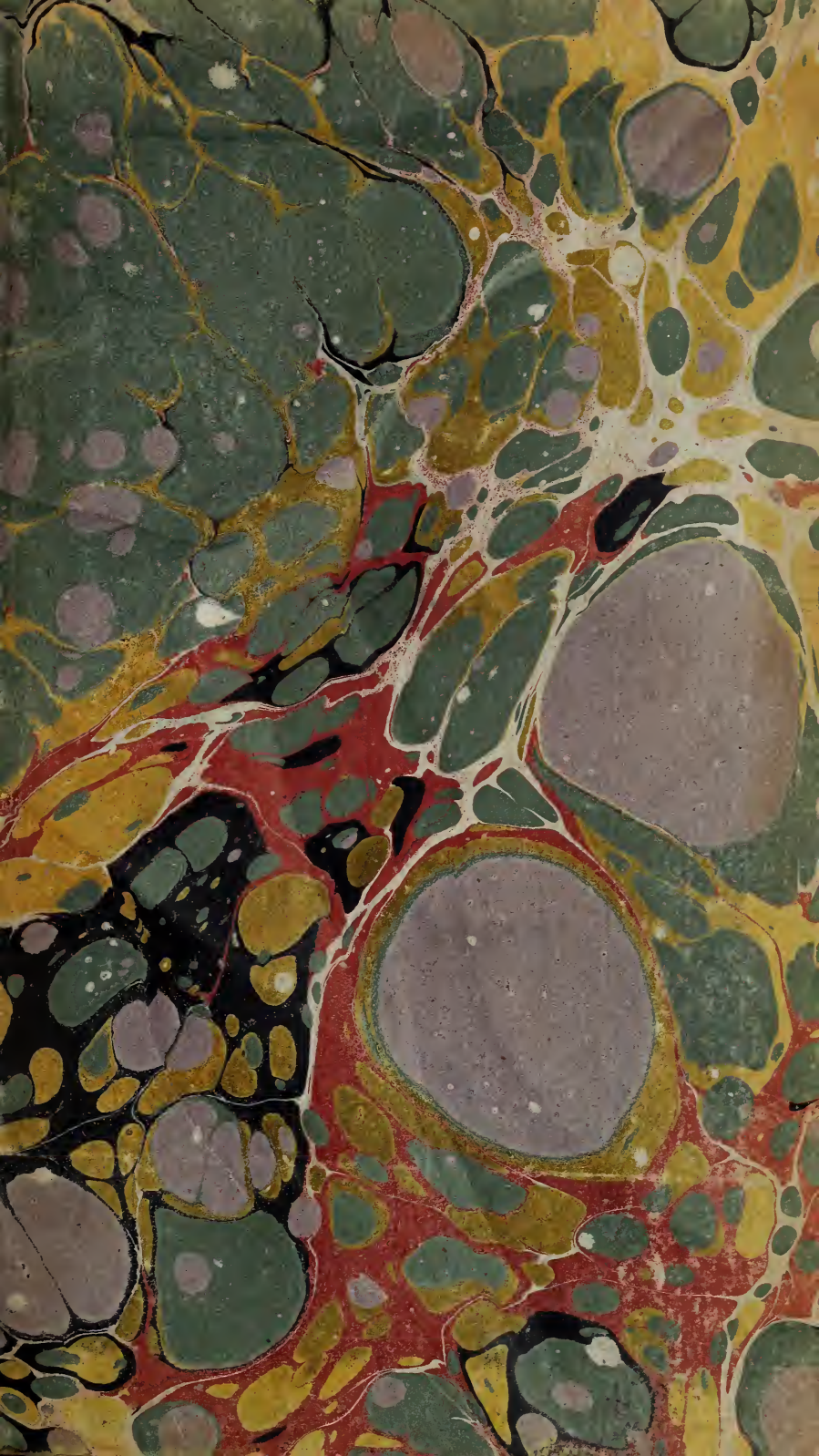






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THE
HISTORY
OF
MISS GREVILLE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

E. KEIR, MRS. SUSANNA HARVEY

BY THE AUTHOR OF
INTERESTING MEMOIRS.

VOLUME SECOND.

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THE
HISTORY
OF
MISS GREVILLE.

LETTER XXXVII.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr Belford.

Grove.

I CONFESS, Belford, you have reason to complain of my silence, though I am sure you are too just, both to my friendship and your own merit, to place it to the score of neglect. At once to plead my excuse, and secure your pardon, let me confess, that a sentiment more tender,

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A

more

more powerful, even than that which from our earliest years has united us, now wholly engrosses a heart, which hitherto you alone have possessed.

In my last I informed you, that instead of purchasing the estate I came here to survey, I had the comfort, by a seasonable loan to Mr Greville, to continue him in his possession; and by that means, I hope, to restore peace to his amiable wife and daughter, whom his want of œconomy, had brought to the verge of ruin.

That daughter, Belford! that charming daughter, has indeed rivalled you in my affections, though not driven you from my thoughts. The first moment I beheld her, I was struck with the modest simplicity of her manners, and still more by a look of settled sadness, that gave to her delicate features an expression which melted my very soul, and awakened there
more

more tender complacence, than I had ever felt for any person at first sight. But what most powerfully attracted me to this amiable young creature, was the striking difference in her behaviour towards me, from that I have generally remarked in girls of her age ; who, bent on conquest, are eager to display all their charms and accomplishments, and, in their rage to be admired, overlook the important art of pleasing, and thus baffle their own shallow designs.

Think me not severe in this observation. You know I am not usually so to that sex, whose native sweetness and gentleness gives them an influence over us, and an importance in society, which none will deny, but such as are unworthy of being distinguished by their favour. I will confess however to you, from whom I do not attempt concealing even my own foibles, that I have been great-

ly shocked of late, by advances made me by different ladies, whose youth, education, and sense of propriety, I flattered myself would have prevented a conduct so disgusting. It is really mortifying to one's self-love, as well as highly offensive to one's delicacy, to perceive, that the addition of five thousand a-year, renders one an object of universal attention, and enables the world to discover in the possessor, a thousand good qualities that were entirely overlooked in a man of fifteen hundred.

Perhaps you may allege, that I am too delicate in my notions of female conduct. But let me ask, what happiness can be expected in the married state, without possessing the whole affections of that heart, to which ours is tenderly united? and is this likely to be the case, when so powerful a rival as avarice has already become master of it?

But

But to return to the lovely Julia. As I attributed her melancholy to the score of her father's misconduct, and consequent embarrassments, I made no doubt of seeing her spirits instantly recover, when these were so unexpectedly removed. But though, with a modesty and grace, inseparable from youth and innocence, and a delicacy which indicated a very superior understanding, she expressed the deepest sense of her father's obligation to the generosity of a stranger, (as she termed it),—I saw with pain, that, in removing one load from her spirits, I had only in part relieved the amiable sufferer; who, I soon found, was sinking under the daily increasing danger and affliction, of a most unhappy and deserving mother, to whom the ties of nature, were the least powerful of those that attached her.

6 MISS GREVILLE.

In how amiable, how exalted a view did this conduct place her ! Wholly forgetful of herself, and neglectful of those charms which entitled her to claim the admiration of that heart, which she could not but perceive she had already deeply interested, she devoted her whole cares to her afflicted parent, and never seemed at ease, but when contributing either to her comfort or amusement.

As I was kindly admitted, at all hours, into the apartment of Mrs Greville, I had opportunity to observe the most minute actions of this angelic young creature ; and, with truth, can affirm, that through every one of these, the spotless purity of a soul, uncontaminated by commerce with the world, and the tenderness of a heart formed to be the abode of every generous and benevolent affection, shone with a mild lustre, that rendered their native charms a thousand times
more

more touching, than if they had been displayed with all the advantages of art.

But, before quitting a subject on which I could dwell for hours with increasing delight, I must acquaint you with a circumstance that has just come to my knowledge, and serves to confirm the esteem, as well as tenderness, I feel for Miss Greville.

At the very time when her father's affairs were in the most desperate situation, she was addressed by Lord Rochdale, to whose licentious character, and immense fortune, you are no stranger.

Had either the slightest spark of avarice, vanity, or ambition, lodged in her young breast, the title of Countess of Rochdale would have blown that spark into a flame : But, with a firmness which
drew

drew on her the severest treatment from a father, unworthy of such a child, I am assured she rejected him ; at the same time regretting the necessity his vices laid her under of refusing a match, which would have enabled her to relieve the distress of her parents, and indulge the generous propensities of her own feeling heart.

Happy, Belford ! supremely happy the man, who can obtain, by deserving, so inestimable a treasure. Whether this felicity is reserved for your friend, time must determine. My own feelings tell me, that it is impossible to gain such a heart, unless by persevering in that attentive and respectful conduct, which circumstances so peculiarly delicate as hers require. However paradoxical it may seem, I believe it is a truth which observation often confirms, that gratitude in the female heart is a foe to love ;
and

and that the latter is so jealous of his empire there, that he dreads even the shadow of a rival.

Adieu. By the length of this epistle, you may judge of the power the tyrant has already assumed over

Your sincere friend,

CHARLES MORTIMER.

Miss Greville to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

So I have infected you with my suspicions! "You foresee—you are convinced, that Sir Charles Mortimer is already my lover." Ah Maria! what do you foresee then, but more sources of distress springing up to embitter the little remaining comfort of your ill-fated Julia.

Have you not experienced, when about to lose a friend, that though you
could

could yourself behold the danger with calmness, you was shocked, beyond measure, on perceiving that danger become apparent to others?

Just so it fares with your Julia. Though I have hinted my fears of a preference, which I must ever reckon a misfortune, because unable to return it ; yet I have not courage to hear you affirm as certain, what I have only supposed possible.

I wish I had not told you my suspicions. By confirming them, you have given me a consciousness, a restraint, when in company with Sir Charles that I cannot describe, but feel insufferably irksome. Whenever his eyes meet mine, they cover me with blushes : I tremble if we are left alone. Heavens ! should he suspect—should he imagine—should a mistaken compassion for my supposed weakness

ness mislead him,—Maria! how shall I conduct myself in a situation so painfully indelicate?

It is rendered almost insupportable by the behaviour of the odious Rochdale. With all the insolence of rank, and of those mean souls who derive their claim to distinction from the titles their conduct dishonours, he intrudes upon us at all hours; and, without the slightest regard to female delicacy, of which indeed he seems to be a very incompetent judge, entertains me with his disgusting gallantry, even in the presence of Sir Charles Mortimer. Judge how perplexing is my situation at such times, when it is impossible to conceal my uneasiness; and when the visible difference in my manner of treating Sir Charles, must naturally confirm his suspicions of a preference in his favour.

But

But what redoubles all my embarrassments, is the distress of my dear mother. Sir Charles's partiality cannot escape observation like hers: And though she has never once hinted her suspicions to me, a thousand trifling circumstances not only betray them, but indicate also an anxious wish, to discover whether this partiality be reciprocal.

When I reflect, that not only my own, but my mother's happiness, might be secured, by an union so highly advantageous, I am conscious that I ought to endeavour at least to be sensible—to be grateful. Ah Maria! could the convictions of the understanding regulate at once the feelings of the heart, the sentiments of mine would accord with my duty, and the wishes of my beloved parent, whom to render happy is my supreme desire. But in proportion as my reason acquiesces in the propriety of such

a step, my heart revolts from the idea with horror.

After all, Maria, is it not unjustifiable in a woman, from any motive whatever, to become the wife of one man, whilst she is conscious of entertaining a preference for another? Ah! why, why should this be the unhappy lot of your friend! By what strange fatality is it, that we cannot love whom we highly esteem; and continue to remember—to pity—to deplore, whom we ought to renounce, forget, and despise?

You tell me, that time will blunt even the keenest sorrow. Perhaps it may be so; but your unhappy Julia has hitherto been a stranger to its healing influence. The grief we experience for the death of our friends, finds its own cure in the violence of its expressions, and even in the hopelessness of relief: ne-

cessity often furnishes a remedy, when all others fail. But what remains for us, when forced by pride, by delicacy, to conceal the killing anguish inflicted by the unkindness of those we love? When, even amidst our grief, resentment, and despondency, hope, at times, finds access to the heart, and keeps alive there those various sentiments, which agitate and disturb, but never can be entirely extirpated.

I will not injure your friendship, by apologising for thus constantly renewing my demands on your sympathy; or suppose it necessary to assure you, that, with gratitude proportioned to your kindness, and esteem due to your merit, I am inviolably yours,

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVIII.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr Belford.

Grove.

The anxiety you express about an affair which so deeply interests my heart, and on the success of which my whole happiness must now depend, is of a piece, my dear Belford, with your whole conduct towards me. How inestimable a blessing is a friend, to whom one can impart every disquieting thought; from whom one is ever secure, both of advice and sympathy!

Though I have been at the utmost pains to develop them, I am still greatly at a loss with regard to Miss Greville's sentiments. The gentleness and affability of her manners, at first inspired me with hopes agreeable to my wishes: but

after the most watchful attention, I can find nothing to confirm them, or give me ground to believe, that I have inspired her with any other sentiment than that of esteem.

It is impossible that the ardor of mine can entirely escape her observation ; but with much pain I remark, that the moment any expression betrays the state of my heart, the ease of her manner is exchanged for a cautious reserve ; her looks express the disturbance of her soul ; and a certain air of timidity and restraint too plainly discovers, that she dreads being made acquainted with a passion, which she feels it impossible to return.

With all this, however, the artless testimonies I receive of her esteem, certainly give room for hope. Perhaps, my friend, the persecution she has lately suffered, on account of Lord Rochdale, may
render

render her fearful of again awakening her father's resentment.

Ah Belford ! how little does she know the soul of your friend, if she suspects him of a conduct that would occasion her uneasiness ! If she believes he wishes to obtain any other right to her heart, than that which the most tender and disinterested affection would establish ;—if she thinks he aspires to her preference, with any other view, than that of securing his own, by promoting her felicity.

The extreme dejection of her spirits, and at times the absence of her manner, and stifled sighs that steal from her bosom, would almost tempt me to believe, that some tender,—some unfortunate attachment, had made an impression there, that nothing was able to remove. This suspicion was first excited, by a trifling

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circumstance,

circumstance, which I shall relate to you.

On coming one evening into Mrs Greville's apartment, where I usually found her charming daughter at work, or reading aloud to her mother, I was alarmed at her absence, and hastily enquired whether she was ill? I really do not think Julia in such perfect health as I could wish, replied she, though, from fear of injuring mine, she persists in concealing from me the cause of her uneasiness. Is she gone abroad? demanded I. I have insisted on her walking in the garden, returned Mrs Greville, as the evening is delightful.

May I be permitted to follow and enquire after her, Madam? said I. Certainly, Sir Charles; and you will greatly oblige me, if you will try to persuade her to remove my anxiety, by allowing me

me to consult Dr H—, which she has hitherto opposed with an earnestness very unlike her gentle temper, and extremely distressing to me.

I will obey you with pleasure, my dear Madam, returned I. But is there no danger of Miss Greville considering this intrusion as officious? None at all, Sir, replied she: Julia esteems you as you deserve, and will never place any action of yours to a wrong motive; far less one which she must see proceeds entirely from the anxiety of a mother.

On entering the garden, I looked round in vain for Miss Greville; but, as it is very extensive, and a thick grove of trees intercepted the view of the lower part, I walked slowly through these, when, on making another stop, I perceived the lovely mourner seated in a little arbour, pale and languishing; her head
resting

resting on one hand, and holding in the other a letter, which she seemed to peruse with much emotion, and was obliged often to lay down, to wipe away those tears that streamed from her downcast eyes.

Never did I behold a more affecting spectacle. I stood some moments irresolute, whether to intrude on her at a time so distressing, or to return to the house. Impelled by an irresistible curiosity, to discover the source of her sorrows, and a fond wish to alleviate them, I was about to advance, when raising her eyes from the letter, she perceived me standing in an attitude of astonishment. She started up, and, with a face covered with blushes, and a look of the utmost confusion, hastily put the letter into her pocket; and approaching me with a bashful and hesitating air, endeavoured to accost me with the usual compliments; but the
words

words died on her lips, and she remained silent.

I was almost as much disordered as herself. After pausing to recover myself, I fear, Miss Greville, said I, I am an unwelcome intruder. Pray, may I request to know whether you have received any bad news in that letter which seemed to occasion you so much distress?

A deeper blush overspread her averted face, and she replied, in a low and tremulous voice, "The distressing circumstances contained in that letter, Sir, are long since past, and ought to be forgotten for ever." There was something in her manner of pronouncing this sentence, that precluded all farther enquiry.

I then informed her of her mother's anxiety, and apprehensions about her health,

health, and, with all the tender concern I felt, urged her to comply with Mrs Greville's request. With the most engaging sweetness, she replied, I am truly grateful to you, Sir Charles, for your obliging care of my health, which I assure you is perfectly good. My dear mother's fears have no other foundation, than that depression of spirits which I cannot always shake off; and for which, a thousand circumstances, but too well known both to her and you, Sir, may easily account. Perhaps too a certain feeling—a sense—a too deep and painful sense of favours I can never repay, adds to the number. Oh, Sir Charles, it is delightful to generous minds to confer obligations; but you know not—you never can know, how painful it is in some situations to receive them.

On

On saying this, she cast down her lovely intelligent eyes, which spoke still more plainly her meaning.

For the first time in my life, I presumed to take hold of her hand, on which a tear had fallen in silence, and pressing it to my lips—I will not affect to misunderstand you, most admirable of women, said I; but if you would not make me miserable, do not, I conjure you, do not again mention the word obligation. What gift in the power of fortune to bestow, can equal the value of your friendship—your esteem; my Julia, let me say your tenderness! I paused, afraid I had gone too far. On searching in her mild eyes, for her reply, I found no resentment there, but saw a deadly paleness instantly succeed the blushes occasioned by the former part of our conversation. She heaved a deep sigh, then looking up to me with the sweetness of an angel—
Be

Be assured, Sir Charles, my gratitude, my esteem for you, shall be as lasting as that life which your friendship will serve to endear.

Full of this affecting interview, and ardently desirous of discovering whether my suspicions were well founded, I begged Miss Greville to remain a few minutes, till I should return, and give her mother an account of my embassy. After assuring that tender parent, that her fears were without foundation, I ventured, though in the most delicate terms, to hint my own.

The retired manner in which Julia has spent her life, said this amiable woman, has rendered her a stranger to the company of young persons of your sex, unless such as were little calculated to make any impression on a heart of such delicacy as hers. Indeed I am convinced,

ced, that the only sentiments she harbours there, are such as too fondly endear her to mine; and that her melancholy has no other source, than those which are too apparent to the world, and must be deeply felt by one so strongly impressed with a sense of filial duty, and so fearful of losing a mother endeared to her by every tie."

Miss Greville entering, put an end to this discourse, which entirely removed my former suspicions. She rallied her mother with great sweetness, on her resolution of making her sick by mere force of argument: "Your opinion weighs so much with me on all occasions, my dear Madam, added she, that you really must not persist in it any longer, lest I should at last be persuaded both out of my health and senses."

We passed the rest of the evening most agreeably. Miss Greville appeared more easy and cheerful than usual. Perhaps, Belford, I have been mistaken, in ascribing to indifference, what was the effect of bashfulness alone.

In polite circles, girls of Miss Greville's age soon exchange their natural timidity, and delicate reserve, for that air of the world, as it is called; that mixture of boldness and familiarity, which is entirely opposite to the female character, and disgusting even in ours.

The fluency with which they descant upon trifles; their extravagant modes of expression; their impetuosity and keenness, "whilst with a vengeance they commend or blame," are all so strikingly contrasted by the modest, gentle, unassuming manners of the lovely Julia, that it is not surprising, I should miscon-
strue

strange appearances which are so new to me.

Again I repeat, it is from time and perseverance, I must hope to obtain that certainty, which I now find is essential to the peace, as well as happiness, of

Your faithful friend,

CHARLES MORTIMER.

LETTER XXXIX.

Miss Greville to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

Why does my gentle Maria pain my heart, by declining to accept of the trinkets I sent her, and for which, it is probable, I shall no longer have any occasion?

You talk of obligations, Maria! This is not the language of friendship. It is

for me to adopt this style; but I speak not of favours, nor wish to return yours, otherwise than by putting it in your power more and more to oblige me. I may be wrong; but this appears to me the only proper return which one generous mind can make to another. To receive a favour with a good grace, requires a certain greatness of soul, which our natural pride, and love of independence, render it very difficult to exercise. But that is surely an unbecoming pride, which makes us revolt against obligations, conferred by those we esteem, and wish to render happy. I ought not to blame you, however, for under-rating those you have bestowed on me, because you are ignorant of the value of such kind attentions, to a heart so deeply wounded.—May you never be able to judge of it by experience!

Sir

Sir Charles, who resides at the Grove, continues to visit us frequently. He speaks in the highest terms of that worthy family, and I heard him one day, when in company with my father, bestow the greatest encomiums on Mr Rivers, with whom he was at college. My father looked grave, fixed his eyes on me, and immediately changed the subject. I have conversed on several occasions with Sir Charles, and always find new reason to admire the nobleness of his sentiments, and benevolence of his heart. Had mine been in my power to bestow, I am sure I never could have found an object more deserving, both of my esteem and tenderness. But that wayward heart, Maria, seeks only for reasons to justify its indifference to a man, who evidently beholds me with partiality, and treats me, on all occasions, with such respectful attention, as demands my utmost gratitude.

I never felt myself more at a loss with regard to the conduct I ought to pursue than at present. Averse to give pain, and incapable of ingratitude, I cannot treat Sir Charles with that coldness and distance, which, to be truly generous, I ought perhaps to assume. Sometimes I flatter myself that I am mistaken, and that good-breeding, friendship, or humanity alone, dictate those attentions he pays me. Ah, Maria! fain would I think thus; but the feelings of this apprehensive heart, too well convince me of the nature of his. The same watchful regard to my slightest comfort or convenience; the same lively pleasure in obliging me; the same anxious solicitude about my health; the same constant desire to render me happy; in short, the same ardent passion which in Rivers taught me to love, in Mortimer teaches me to fear.—Alas! have I not cause to fear? Has not this fatal, this delusive tenderness,
already

already occasioned me feverish pangs, than can arise from any other species of disappointment? Every time I think of the possibility of sacrificing the peace of this excellent young man, and deceiving him, perhaps, by my unguarded conduct, my heart sickens with self-reproach. Who should be so watchful over the peace of others, as one who knows its full value, by its long absence from her own bosom? Who should be so averse to inspire that fatal passion, as she who has suffered so cruelly by its indulgence?

With your usual sense and goodness, think for me, and advise me, my ever-amiable friend; for indeed at present I am unable to think for myself.

Perhaps some fortunate, some unforeseen circumstance may occur, and deliver me from my difficulties; at least I will hope so. Often, when our prospects

spects are most gloomy, and our way most perplexed, that unseen hand, which directs the course of all human affairs, is stretched out for our deliverance, and conducts our steps to safety and peace. Conscious of the rectitude of my intentions, I commit the issue of my conduct to that Being, whom it is my unfeigned desire to please; who will confirm the good resolutions he inspires, and never forsake those that trust in him. Adieu, dearest Maria, adieu.

JULIA GREVILLE.

LETTER XL.

To the same.

Harwood.

Ah, Maria! there is no longer a possibility of shutting my eyes to the truth. An accident last night, of a very singular

lar nature, led to the discovery of those sentiments, which I have long suspected were the springs of Sir Charles's generous conduct. Yet let me not be unjust, amidst that anguish and perplexity, he has unknowingly occasioned me. Compassion alone suggested the relief of my father; the plan he proposed with that view, was concerted before we had passed an hour together, and executed almost as soon as concerted.

Goodness, like his, is so singular, that, not being able to account for it on the principles that actuate the generality of mankind, we are base enough to derive it from motives which greatly lessen, if not destroy its merit.

The evening being remarkably fine, Sir Charles begged permission to attend me on horseback, to view a cascade of an extraordinary height, and beautiful appearance,

appearance, about five miles from hence, which falls over a rock with vast rapidity ; part of which is broken into such a variety of shapes, as present the most romantic and agreeable images. The scenery around is remarkably wild and picturesque, and finely suited to the sublime ideas which, in such a place, one is naturally led to indulge. We committed our horses to our attendants, and descended, though with a good deal of difficulty, to view the cavern into which the torrent falls. The prodigious noise, occasioned by the cascade, prevented the possibility of conversing. We were, therefore, obliged to express our mutual admiration by looks and signs.

Having satisfied our curiosity, we were about to return, when our attention was again recalled, by one of the most striking figures I ever beheld. It was a genteel young woman, dressed in a white linen

nen gown, without any ornaments. Her fine features were shaded with a straw hat in the simplest form, which heightened the extreme delicacy of her complexion. She stood leaning against one of the rocks, and, with a pencil and small paper-book in her hand, appeared to be taking some sketches of the surrounding landscape, which indeed was suited to the genius of a Salvator. At her foot sat a beautiful girl, seemingly about four years of age, watching a little dog, who lay asleep by her side. Her lap was filled with wild pinks and daisies, which profusely enamelled the turf; and she had taken off her bonnet, which she was ornamenting with these, in a very pretty and fanciful manner.

Our astonishment could only be equalled by our pleasure, on beholding this little group. The appearance of this stranger, in a place so very retired, excited

ted in us the most ardent curiosity ; and, though I was unwilling to intrude upon her, I stopped a while, in hopes she might look up. The sweet child, unnoticed by her mother, who was intent on her work, and prevented, by the noise of the water, from hearing her stir, got up, and running to the side of the bank which hung over the river, her foot slipped, and she fell down.

Sir Charles, with a speed like lightning, flew to the relief of the child ; whose clothes, having fortunately caught hold of the root of a tree, was prevented, by that circumstance, from drowning. The poor mother, on raising her eyes, and missing the child, flew, almost frantic, to the brink of the precipice ; from whence she had the comfort of seeing her little darling in safety, in the arms of Sir Charles ; who, with looks of
sincere

sincere pleasure, restored her to those of her trembling mother.

She raised her fine eyes to heaven, and thanked God for this almost miraculous preservation of her child. She next endeavoured to express her gratitude to her benefactor ; but, on seeing me, she started, turned pale, and trembled so violently, that I was afraid of her fainting. When she a little recovered herself, she withdrew her eyes from me, as if afraid of giving me pain ; made the most graceful acknowledgments for our humanity ; and expressed sincere regret for the trouble she and her child had occasioned.

Sir Charles politely offered her his arm, to assist her in climbing the hill, and requested me to accept of the other. When we reached the top of it, " My little cottage, Sir, said she, is hard by ; and though I am ashamed to ask a lady and

gentleman of your appearance to visit it, I shall think myself still farther indebted to your goodness, if you will deign to accept of such simple refreshment as I can offer." The genteel manner in which this speech was delivered, only added to the desire we had to inform ourselves further as to the name and situation of this elegant and interesting stranger.

During our walk, I observed her eyes often fixed on me, with a look of earnest sorrow, that exceedingly affected me; and, on hearing Sir Charles pronounce my name, she seemed quite amazed, and suddenly exclaimed, "Bless me, Madam! is not Clifford your name? I could not help imagining, from the striking resemblance, that you were sister to"—here a faint blush overspread her cheek, and she stopped. Indeed, Madam, replied I, there is none of my connections who bear that name.

My

My father is Mr Greville of Harwood, about five miles from hence, where I would be very happy to see you, and improve the accident of this morning, to the purpose of making us better acquainted with each other. Again a blush covered the face of the stranger; she heaved a deep sigh; but answered only with a courtesy.

By this time we reached her dwelling, which resembled the habitation of some aerial, rather than terrestrial being. Every thing around it wore the air of enchantment. It was covered with thatch, and situated on the brow of a beautiful little eminence, embroidered with daisies, and inclosed with a hedge of sweet-brier. At the bottom ran a brook, which divided the inclosure from a small garden, filled with herbs, roots, and flowers.

Both Sir Charles and I expressed our admiration of this delightful spot; but the vivacity of our emotions was checked by that air of melancholy which seemed to have taken possession of the stranger.

Having begged our excuse a few minutes, she retired, and left us at liberty to examine the furniture of her apartment.

It was elegant, and nicely clean. A fine enamelled watch hung over the mantle-piece. A piano-forte, and a neat mahogany book-case, filled with a pretty assortment of books, increased our astonishment, and excited, I believe, in both our minds, some suspicions no way to the advantage of our hosts.

She returned with no other attendant than the sweet little child, who carried some cake on a waiter, whilst her mother

ther brought some fruit in one hand, and a bason of cream in the other.

“ My remote situation, said she, (being several miles distant from any town or neighbour, except the farmer, who supplies me with such provisions as the country affords), must plead my excuse for presenting my guests with such homely fare ; but, should they ever honour me with another visit, I hope I shall be able to entertain them in a manner more suitable to my sense of their goodness.”

After having accepted this simple treat, with all the complacency such hospitality demanded, we rose to take farewell of our elegant hostess. “ I shall certainly direct my airings often this way, said I, since you, Madam, obligingly assure me, that I shall be made a welcome guest at this delightful cottage. Pray, may I request to know the name of its obliging

D 3

mistress ?”

“mistress?” My name, Madam, replied she, is Clifford. So saying, we parted; and I returned home so full of my morning’s adventure, that I immediately communicated it to my mother.

I was both surprised and mortified, at the calmness with which she listened to my narration, and the praises I bestowed on this fair unknown. “It is one unhappy effect, my dear, said she, of an extensive knowledge of the world, to render us cautious and suspicious, and to check that sweet benevolence, that glows in the bosom of uncorrupted youth.

I do not wish to repress, but to regulate your sentiments, by the prudence which experience supplies.

Always believe the best you can of your species; but remember, that appearances are often fallacious, and, if
trusted

trusted on every occasion, may betray you into error, and even danger. The children of misfortune have a claim, not only to sympathy and relief, but to respect ; because they are peculiarly sensible to the wounds inflicted by carelessness or neglect. Small favours, and quiet attentions, excite a more pleasing and tender gratitude, in minds of real delicacy, than great obligations. We are oppressed with a sense of the latter, and the feeling of conscious inferiority which they awaken, is always painful ; but the former is soothing to our self-love, without wounding our pride or generosity. Splendid actions too, are often the effect of vanity ; constant attentions are always the offspring either of friendship or humanity.

In the present case, there appears to me, my Julia, great reason for giving you this admonition,

Mrs

Mrs Clifford's situation gives room for unfavourable conjectures. Let us do nothing rashly, but take every prudent method to obtain certain knowledge of her character. I hope she will prove worthy of your esteem. If not, she will, on that very account, be the more deserving of compassion."

In the evening, Sir Charles proposed a walk in the wood; to which I readily consented, being desirous of talking over the affair with him without witnesses.

I plainly see, Sir Charles, said I, that this amiable and interesting stranger is unhappy; nor shall I be at ease till I discover the cause of it. Perhaps want of fortune may occasion her distress; for I remarked she had no servant. Yet, alas! in this case, what can I do more than pity her?—If she is unhappy, I will love
her

her the more ; my sympathy perhaps may afford her some relief.

Is it possible, Miss Greville, demanded Sir Charles, looking at me with a kind of mournful earnestness, that your heart can take so lively an interest in a stranger? or that to be unhappy, forms a claim, not only on your compassion, but your love? I blushed, and immediately perceiving to what this question led, answered with some hesitation, “For one of my own sex I certainly feel in this manner, but”—Here I stopped, and Sir Charles, regarding me with diffidence, after a short pause—“I see, answered he, with a deep sigh, I see, amiable Julia, your generous caution—your aversion to give pain : but surely, if to be a prey to continual anxiety, doubt, and apprehension ; if to wish for your approbation above all things, yet almost to despair of obtaining your favour ; if this is to be
unhappy,

unhappy, I may at least claim that pity which you are always ready to bestow on the unfortunate, if I dare not hope for that love, which exalted worth alone can deserve." Oh! Sir Charles, I replied, in the utmost agitation, talk no more to me in this style: you will for ever destroy that friendship and confidence which at present subsists between us. "No, dearest Miss Greville, interrupted he, with vivacity, I would only render that friendship more animated and secure, by uniting it with the best affections of our souls. Fortune, believe me, was never the object of my wishes; but, if permitted to share it with you, I shall then regard it as a peculiar blessing, as it will supply pleasures to that enlarged and benevolent heart, whose slightest wish, it would be my constant study to prevent."

I know not what answer I made to this speech. It threw me into such perplexity

plexity and distress, that Sir Charles, perceiving the anguish of my mind, strove to relieve me, by changing the conversation. He again resumed the subject of Mrs Clifford, and asked, whether I would not go and make her another visit? I think your next, said he, should be without witnesses; as the presence of a third person may throw a restraint on your conversation. When you chuse to go, I will attend you to the cottage, and return for you, after lengthening my ride.

I was much pleased with this instance of Sir Charles's delicacy, who, I plainly perceived, entertained the same suspicions that I did, and perhaps wished me at once to be satisfied with regard to the propriety of continuing my connection with Mrs Clifford.

I thanked him for his polite offer to escort me ; and telling him, I would gladly accept of it on some future occasion, we parted for the evening.

Never, Maria, never have I experienced a state of more distressful irresolution than at present. You say justly, Never can I hope to enter the marriage-state with fairer prospects ; never shall I meet with a man of more real worth, amiable manners, and unexceptionable character, than Sir Charles Mortimer. Yet ah, my friend ! is it possible that you, you to whom all the weakness of my soul has been confided, should urge me to marry Sir Charles ? Believe me, I shudder with horror at the bare idea of such injustice. What ! in return for the most generous and tender affection, the most unsuspecting and confiding friendship, should I bring to the bosom of a husband, a heart yet bleeding with recent perfidy, subject
to

to grief, resentment, and endless regrets; labouring, perhaps ineffectually, to forget or conceal the past, without being able to enjoy the present; the source of care and anxiety, instead of comfort and joy; the destroyer, instead of the preserver of his peace! Oh, Maria! it must not, cannot be.

I greatly fear, the endeavours of Sir Charles, to save my father from ruin, are all in vain. Never, surely, was infatuation equal to his! On going down stairs this evening, I found a man waiting for him at the door, with a couple of fine hunters, which he has just purchased. My mother once more attempted, though in the gentlest manner, to remind him, that it was no longer our own fortune, but that of Sir Charles Mortimer, on which we should incroach, if we continued to live beyond our income. My father replied to this remonstrance, in a

manner so indecent, that I will not shock you with the repetition. Alas, Maria! where shall I look for relief? I am surrounded with dangers, which I have neither strength to conquer, nor skill to elude. My mind is distracted with opposite and contending passions. I am doubtful of the path I ought to pursue; and perhaps unable to pursue it, if known. Pray with me, dearest Maria! O pray that Heaven may direct your friend; for she is bewildered in a labyrinth, from which she sees no way left to escape. Adieu.

JULIA GREVILLE.

LETTER XLI.

Miss Herbert to Miss Greville.

London.

No, my Julia, no: Your friend would not urge you to marry Sir Charles Mortimer,

timer, were she not confident, that such an union would prove the means of your lasting and mutual happiness. I would not have you carry fear, sorrow, and constraint, into the bosom of an affectionate husband ; but I would have you learn, by giving scope to the natural tenderness and generosity of your heart, to exchange these painful feelings, for esteem, confidence, and even love itself.

Start not, my amiable Julia ! If seeming worth in Rivers, even on short acquaintance, could make so deep and lasting an impression on that gentle heart, what effects will not the daily discovery of real goodness in Mortimer produce there, and tender affection, of which you will be the sole object, through a long and happy life ?

I know that such a heart as yours, cannot long exist without an object ; and am

persuaded, that the gratitude excited by a conduct so noble and disinterested as that of Sir Charles, would be a security, not only for your conduct, but your sentiments.

It was your misfortune to be placed in circumstances, that left no room for the exercise of your usual prudence, and which compelled you, as it were, to follow, where the first generous impulse of your nature led the way. You allowed your heart to determine in favour of a man, whose merits your judgment had not weighed; and of whose temper, the most essential circumstance in the matrimonial union, you had no opportunity of acquiring a thorough knowledge.

Look back, my beloved Julia, on the fatal consequences of sudden prepossessions, and thank Heaven which affords you an opportunity of weighing with
impartiality,

impartiality, and determining with prudence. I know your soul would spurn the dishonest thought, of forming the most important of all connections from prudential motives alone. Yet surely, in your very peculiar circumstances, these should be allowed their proper influence in determining your conduct.

Surely the comfort of a fond and afflicted mother, the happiness of a sincere respectable lover, the enlarged power of doing good, and of becoming an exalted pattern of all those virtues which at present you can only love and admire, ought to have much weight with benevolence and rectitude like yours.

Above all, the security of being placed beyond the reach of those shocking insults, and daring outrages, to which youth, beauty, and dependence, expose our helpless sex.

But, though I wish to suggest, I do not mean to urge you. Too sacred do I hold that most solemn of all engagements, to wish my Julia should form it, unless she should be conscious of such a preference for Sir Charles, as would enable her to bestow her hand without reluctance. After all, my beloved friend, it is your own feelings, your own sense and delicacy, that must fix your resolution on the present occasion.

I am anxious to learn something more of the fair recluse. I need not desire you to write soon; for your indulgence keeps pace with the wishes of your truly affectionate

MARIA HERBERT.

LETTER

LETTER XLII.

Miss Greville to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

Oh, Maria ! what a tale have I to unfold ! and how unable am I for the task ! How my heart sickens at the vices of the world—how it sighs to escape from its sorrows ! Surely, my dearest friend, it is justly termed a valley of tears. For one day passed in tranquil enjoyment, how many do we waste in bitterness and sorrow ! Nor are even the most serene entirely free from clouds and storms. From the cradle to the grave, man is liable to accident, exposed to misery, and tributary to affliction.

I wonder not at the anxiety you express to be made acquainted with my unfortunate

fortunate recluse. She is indeed one of the most amiable and engaging of women. As I really wished to be at liberty to visit her alone, I set out earlier than usual on my morning's expedition. When I reached the cottage, I found her seated at work, with the same appearance of neatness as formerly; but, being without a hat, I had now a better view of her fine, though faded face, which had an expression of the most pathetic sorrow in it, I ever beheld.

She thanked me, with eyes full of tears, for so soon fulfilling the promise I had made, of revisiting her cottage. I have no companion here, Madam, said she, but my little Clara; and her innocent prattle is, at times, too affecting for my weak spirits.

I am sorry, Madam, replied I, to see a person of your appearance and education,

tion, in a place so mean and obscure; and I hope you will impute the question to a better motive than curiosity, when I presume to enquire the cause of your living in this manner! Indeed Miss Greville, said she, you are so very gentle and compassionate, that I shall make no scruple to acquaint you with my unfortunate story; though I fear you will not be able to acquit me of great imprudence in the commencement of it. Heaven knows, my punishment has at least equalled my error!

My father has a small estate in Yorkshire; and, having several other children, to avoid the expence of their education, I being the eldest, he enlarged the plan of mine, that I might the better assist in instructing my sisters. An aunt, who had been my god-mother, and promised to make me her heir, usually invited me to spend some weeks with her before

fore the races. About five years ago, I accordingly came to York, to partake in the amusements of that gay season, when one night, at the assembly, it was my misfortune to be seen by a gentleman of the name of Clifford ; who, being pleased with my appearance, got himself introduced to me as a partner, by one of the company. He was remarkably assiduous in his attentions to me ; and, though considerably older, had something so insinuating in his manner and conversation, that I made no scruple to admit his visits at my aunt's, after having acquainted her with the name of the person by whom he was introduced to me. He soon became my professed lover ; but, telling me, that his whole dependence was on an uncle, from whom he had very high expectations, he entreated me to conceal our attachment from my aunt. After a thousand arts to insinuate himself into my confidence and affection, in which he was but too successful,

ful,

ful, he came one day in great haste to inform me, that his uncle was suddenly taken ill; and conjured me, as the last proof of that tenderness I had confessed for him, to consent to a private marriage, and accompany him to ——shire, where the death of his uncle would soon set him at liberty to avow his choice to the whole world, as well as enable me to befriend and assist my father's family.

My utter ignorance of that world, Miss Greville, can alone excuse my rash credulity. That very evening, having prepared every thing for my elopement, I left the house of my kind relation, met him at an inn, where we were married by a clergyman of his acquaintance, and set off immediately for ——shire.

He brought me to this cottage, which was only inhabited by an old woman, who continued to act in the capacity of
my

my servant. Pretending to receive letters, acquainting him with his uncle's recovery, he told me it would be absolutely necessary for us to conceal our marriage for a little while. To this I cheerfully consented, having no suspicion of his honour, and finding all my happiness in promoting his.

He frequently left me, but always returned with redoubled fondness. He purchased these books, a piano-forte, and every thing that could promote my amusement. Six months passed in this agreeable manner, without any thing having occurred to awaken the slightest suspicion on my part. At length he began to leave me more frequently, and to be longer absent from me than at first; and when he returned, I could not help remarking, that he was often thoughtful, and even peevish; and that my cheerfulness and caresses, instead of giving

ving him pleasure as formerly, seemed to be troublesome, or at least insipid to him. It was impossible not to observe so visible an alteration, nor could I help complaining of it ; at the same time entreating him to tell me, if there was any thing in my conduct or manner displeasing to him, that he might judge, by my earnestness to amend, that I lived but to please, and make him happy.

Alas ! by what arts can we recover lost affection ! Neither the complaints of injured confidence, nor the effusions of tenderest love, will rekindle that flame which indifference has extinguished.

From neglect, Mr Clifford proceeded to harshness and reproach. He accused me of ingratitude for his past indulgence ; and even had the inhumanity to complain of my being about to bring expences on him, which he was unable to

support. Judge, dear Miss Greville, what anguish pierced my heart, on occasion of this cruel insinuation. I will not pain yours with too long a recital. Being now far advanced in my pregnancy, I wrote to my father, giving him an account of my unhappy marriage, and entreating him to receive me once more into his house. But he treated my story as a fiction, and me as a victim to my own rashness and credulity. He told me, that there was no such person as my pretended husband; and that regard to his other children, must place an everlasting bar between him and a daughter, who, in return for confidence and indulgence, had brought disgrace upon his family, and weighed down his hoary head with shame and sorrow.

You weep, dear Miss Greville! Would I could weep! But I have shed so many

ny tears, I really think their sources are exhausted.

To add to my severe affliction, my allowance from Mr Clifford was now become so small, that it could scarce serve to support myself, and the old woman. And when the time of my delivery approached, I was obliged to borrow a trifle from the farmer's wife, whom I have formerly mentioned, and whose family forms all my society in this dreary solitude.

Soon after the birth of my daughter, Mr Clifford came to visit me; and brought with him a gentleman, with whose face I thought I was not entirely unacquainted, but could not recollect where I had seen him. As I did not remember ever to have heard his name before, I paid no attention to this circumstance. I was not a little surprised to see

him return next day without Mr Clifford; and still more, to be addressed by him in a style of the most insolent and disgusting gallantry. I was extremely shocked; but he treated both my reproaches and complaints with the utmost calmness. And when I threatened to acquaint my husband with his insolent and treacherous behaviour, he burst into a loud laugh, and told me, with the most daring effrontery, "that I might make myself quite easy on that score, as the same clergyman who united, could at any time divorce us."

At that dreadful moment, the shocking truth flashed on my mind. I instantly recollected, that this was the very person who had married us, and who had doubtless assumed the sacred habit, in order to betray me to shame and utter ruin.

“I am no clergyman, my dear, continued he, but a young nobleman, with a great estate; fond of you to distraction, and willing to make you live, not only in ease, but splendor.

“You have nothing more to hope from Clifford. In plain terms, he is tired of you, and you will never see him again.

“But come, my sweet girl, continued he, in a wheedling tone. Throw aside that moping melancholy air; do justice to these pretty features, and accept the favours which Fortune now proffers you with liberal hand. I will carry you up to town, where plenty and pleasure, love and joy, await you.”

Nothing but that astonishment, which deprived me of all utterance, could have kept me silent during this shocking harangue. At length I recovered the use

of speech ; and, though I knew complaint was vain, vented the intolerable anguish of my mind in a torrent of reproach. Quite exhausted at length with the violence of my distress, I sunk down on a couch in a state of insensibility, approaching to that of death. Happy, had the extremity of my wretchedness put a period to my being. Alas ! for what trials is it still prolonged ! A flood of tears came at last to my relief. But my inhuman persecutor, unmoved with the agony he saw me suffer, continued to insult me with his detestable proposals ; till tired of my complaints, and quite hopeless of success, he went away, and left me abandoned to every species of wretchedness, except that which is inflicted by the consciousness of guilt. Sensible, however, that my own credulity had undone me, this reflection embittered all my sufferings, by continually reminding me, that they might have been prevented.

prevented. Oh ! happy men, who can lose, in the tumult of business, or succession of pleasures, the anguish of disappointment, and the stings of self-reproach !

I wrote to Mr Clifford, and directed my letter as formerly, to be left at the post-office at ——, conjuring him to take pity on my misery, and send me something for the support of myself and child. I was long without receiving any answer. At length he wrote, to inform me, that if I would agree to confine myself to my cottage, and a mile round it, he would allow me ten pounds yearly for my support ; but if ever I were found walking beyond the limits prescribed, or making enquiries after him, I should forfeit my annuity, and incur his everlasting resentment.

What

What could I do, my dear Miss Greville? I accepted these hard terms; and, with the aid of my needle or pencil, contrive to exist in this dreary exile, where my poor unconscious infant is my only comfort. When I reflect on the barbarity of her father, and the sufferings of her mother, I blame myself for wishing Heaven to continue her here, where she must be exposed to inevitable dangers. But if God all-wise see good to spare her, he will, I trust, make her better than her father, and happier than her mother.

For a year past, I have had nothing from Mr Clifford, so have been wholly dependent on my industry for my subsistence. The farmer's wife, having a sister in London married to a haberdasher, she furnishes me with work, and sometimes disposes of my little landscapes, or pieces of embroidery. But affliction, my
 dear

dear Madam, has worn out my constitution ; and I have the dreadful prospect continually before me, of leaving my innocent child on the wide world, without one friend to direct her, a prey to such arts as those which deceived and betrayed her unhappy mother, even when blessed with examples of every virtue before her eyes. Here a torrent of tears interrupted Mrs Clifford's narrative ; and the little Clara seeing her mother hold her handkerchief to her eyes, came running up, and kissing her hand, " Pray, don't cry, Mamma, said she, or I shall cry too ;—pray don't. Indeed I will never run away from you, nor fall down that nasty place again." She kissed the sweet prattler, who seemed quite happy, and, looking fondly in her face, cried, " If you won't cry, Mamma, I will never vex you more, and say my prayers, and keep my frock clean, and do just as I am bid ;—shan't I, Mamma ?" At this moment some person knocked at the

the

the door. The sweet child ran to open it, crying, "Don't stir, Mamma ; I will be your servant." A country-man came forward, and asked, whether Mrs Clifford lived here ? Being answered in the affirmative, he took something out of his pocket, and presenting it to Mrs Clifford, " If you be she, said he, here is a letter for you : And remember, Mistress, you have got it safely out of my hands ; and you are not for to go for to ask me any more questions."

The honest clown having literally obeyed his instructions, retired ; and Mrs Clifford opening the letter, read these words : " Heaven is ever just ; and virtuous industry is secure of its approbation. If Mrs Clifford has any suspicions of the channel in which it hath sent her relief, she is earnestly entreated to confine them to her own breast."

Mrs

Mrs Clifford's astonishment was so great, on reading these words, that she did not perceive a bank-bill, which lay on the ground, and which, on picking up, I perceived to be for fifty pounds.

She deliberated a few moments how to act. The express prohibition contained in the letter, a while kept her silent ; but as accident had already discovered its contents, she considered herself as in a great measure relieved from it. And when she reflected on the injurious suspicions her concealment might awaken, in a person so much disposed to befriend her, she thought herself fully justified for shewing me the letter. When I had read it, I asked her, if she had any suspicion from whom it came? None, she replied ; except Heaven had touched the conscience of the young lord, who had treated her so cruelly : “ for as to Mr Clifford, added she, he has long shown such a niggardly

gantly disposition, that I am sure he would not bestow that sum to keep me from starving. But if it indeed come from that unworthy lord, continued she, I will labour with my hands day and night, rather than be indebted to a wretch I have such reason to detest, as well as despise."

"I am not of opinion, said I, from the style of this letter, that it comes from the quarter you suppose; but perhaps may soon be able to give you some information on the subject.

Mean time, dear Mrs Clifford, exert your utmost resolution to support a life, so necessary to the welfare of your beloved child. Console yourself with the innocence and integrity of your heart; and trust that Being, who is not only powerful to protect, but merciful to support suffering virtue, and who will, at last, eternally

eternally reward it. The poor lady wrung my hand at parting, and told me, that she considered my friendship as the immediate gift of Heaven; and as such, would ever value, and thankfully acknowledge it. On returning home, I found Sir Charles waiting for me, who gently reproached me for breaking our appointment. As we had not fixed the day, Sir, said I, and as I knew not whether this would be convenient——Ah! Miss Greville, interrupted he, sighing, had my company been agreeable to you, you would yourself have obviated that objection. I would not wish to intrude on yours, but I can truly say, the only portion of my time I value, is that which I pass with you. You are very obliging, Sir, returned I; but I really have not the vanity to think my conversation can afford much entertainment to any one, though I have too high an opinion of your integrity.

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grity to believe you talking to me in the style of unmeaning compliment.

It is a style I never adopt, rejoined Sir Charles, even in the beginning of our acquaintance :—to attempt doing so now, would be an insult to your understanding. No, Miss Greville, I will never forfeit the friendship with which you honour me, and which I value as it deserves, by the slightest violation of that sincerity, which forms my only title to your confidence.

And will you swear, as well as say this, Sir Charles, demanded I gaily?—In any court in Christendom, replied he, in the same tone. Well, take care; for I am going to put you to the test. So saying, I brought pen, ink, and paper, and laying them on the table, I will dictate the oath, said I, and you shall subscribe it. I then took up a pen, and wrote this sentence,

tence, "I sent this morning to Mrs Clifford of Fairy-hill, the sum of fifty pounds." Having wrote this, I doubled down the paper, and presenting the blank space for Sir Charles to subscribe,—
 "How, said he, would you really be so unconscionable, as to require me to set my hand and seal to every thing you desire, even without knowing what it is?" I knew what all your fine speeches would come to, Sir Charles, I replied; do you imagine that I am capable of making an unreasonable requisition?

Well, continued he, with the same gay air, and taking up the pen, I will show you what implicit faith I have in your honour, in hopes that I shall yet meet with my reward from your generosity. He then signed his name, which I instantly perceived to be in the very same hand with the letter sent to Mrs Clifford.

Now, Sir Charles, said I, gravely, I have caught you in my toils, and shall certainly punish you as you deserve, for your treasonable practices against friendship. Not only have you sought to deprive me of the knowledge of an action, which you knew would not fail to give me most sincere pleasure; but even to rob my deserving friend, of the praise due to his singular benevolence.

Sir Charles looked amazed, and told me, that it was in my power to make him do any thing, but plead guilty to the crime of voluntarily offending me. Of that, he would maintain his innocence to the last, in the face of all his accusers. Do not, cried I, add obstinate impenitence to premeditated guilt. Hear your charge, and then answer it at your peril.

You, Sir Charles Mortimer did, between the hours of eleven and twelve this morning,

morning, send the sum of fifty pounds to Mrs J. Clifford of Fairy-hill.—Ah ! Sir Charles, guilty, upon my honour !

In reality, my suspicions needed no other confirmation, than the confession made by his animated countenance, which was instantly covered with crimson. Surely, Maria, this ingenious colouring is as becoming in the one sex as the other. I really never saw Sir Charles look so handsome as at that moment.

“ And now, my merciless inquisitor, cried he, let me demand, in my turn, how are you to answer for holding me so long on the rack of suspense, and putting me in mortal fear of your displeasure ? I shall certainly appeal to your justice for costs of suit, and insist on your being confined prisoner four hours to the harpsichord. And further, let me ask, how came you by the very extraordinary

G 3 information

information you have just discovered? I greatly suspect some illicit practices."

I then told Sir Charles of the letter having been delivered in my presence, and the circumstance of the bill dropping out; and having justified poor Mrs Clifford, begged him to tell me, how he thought of sending so liberal a present to one quite a stranger?

Acquaintance with the world, Miss Greville, said he, leads us to act with a degree of circumspection foreign to an ingenuous mind. I easily saw that the appearance and manners of Mrs Clifford, were far superior to her situation; and hence was led to suspect, that there was something peculiar in her story. Her extreme dejection, and the modesty she discovered in the course of our short visit, convinced me, that I had injured her by my first suspicions; and I could not rest
satisfied,

fatisfied, till I should make some atonement for my injustice. Last night, instead of returning to the Grove, I rode towards the farmer's Mrs Clifford mentioned ; and having asked to see his wife, begged her to give me what information she could, respecting this unhappy lady.

She accordingly told me her melancholy story, with which, I suppose, you are already acquainted ; and concluded, with assuring me, that she was one of the most quiet, industrious, obliging young persons she had ever known. I hope, my dear Miss Greville is now satisfied, that I have properly exculpated myself from the several charges brought against me ; and that she will not again condemn me, without a fair hearing.

I expressed the highest approbation of the delicacy, as well as generosity, of Sir Charles's conduct ; and could not help saying,

saying, that, blessed with such a disposition to do good, he would teach me to envy him the power. “O, cried he, eagerly, rather say, dearest Miss Greville, you will teach me to value, to enjoy that, and every other blessing, by condescending to share them with me.” Indeed, Sir Charles, I replied, were our affections always under the command of our reason, you would have no cause to complain of my insensibility to your worth, and the preference with which you honour me: but esteem and gratitude are the only sentiments I can ever feel for you; and if these will satisfy you, believe me, you may rely upon them.

Your esteem and friendship, returned he, will always make me happier than the love of any other woman; but I dare not make the promise you require. I dare not—I will not promise to abandon the sweet hope, of one day converting
that

that esteem into tendernefs. The entrance of my mother, much to my fatifaction, put an end to this converfation ; and Sir Charles claiming the accomplifhment of my promife, I fat down to the harpfichord, of which he is extremely fond, and fung and played his favourite tunes ; for which he thanked me in the moft lively and polite terms. Being engaged with company at the Grove, he left us ; after having obtained my confent to accompany him next Tuefday, on a vifit to our amiable reclufe.

And now, Maria, I fhall put an end to this long letter. By the minute details I give you of all that occurs here, you will fee, that I confide in your kind, and often repeated affurance, that nothing is uninterefting to you, which concerns your faithful and affectionate

JULIA GREVILLE.

LET-

LETTER XLIII.

Miss Herbert to Miss Greville.

London.

How singularly amiable, my dear Julia, is the character of Sir Charles Mortimer ! How few of the other sex do we find capable of a conduct so nobly disinterested !—how very few, alive to all the delicacies of that passion, which they universally profess, but rarely feel ! Sensibility is the source of that refinement and good taste, by which all his actions are distinguished ; and will prove hereafter the means of his unequalled suffering or felicity, according as his present pursuit is successful, or otherwise.

In spite of all the inconveniencies to which it exposes its possessor, a feeling
heart

heart is surely to be regarded as the first of Heaven's blessings. Its very pains are pleasing: how exquisite then its joys! Other qualities are perhaps more essential towards forming the great character, but sensibility never fails to constitute the truly amiable one. The too great indulgence of the tender feelings, however, proves often prejudicial to the exercise of the social virtues. It is only when the former are properly regulated, that they become respectable, by leading to the due discharge of the latter.

I am just returned from hearing our favourite Oratorio performed in St Margaret's church. I have never before heard that delightful composition, except in the theatre. There, many ideas will irresistibly be raised, by the place, and the behaviour of the audience, that but ill accord with those elevated emotions excited by the Messiah. To-day
every

every circumstance co-operated with the music, to raise the soul to heaven. The purpose of the entertainment was to assist a charitable institution. The dress and deportment of the audience were decent and stayed. The place had no ideas associated with it, but such as were suitable to the occasion; and the minds of all were softened and harmonized by the service of the church, which was performed before the Oratorio began.

The songs were in general well sung. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," was exquisitely performed by Miss Harper. It is certainly one of the most heavenly airs that ever was composed, and gives me a higher opinion of the devotion, as well as genius, of Handel, than I should have formed from all the rest of his works together. It inspires into the heart so joyful a confidence, mingled, at the same time, with a tranquillity so peaceful

peaceful and serene, that the incumbrances of flesh are for a moment forgotten, and the entranced soul almost believes herself possessed of the bliss of heaven. My friend, and her present inquietudes, were the first ideas that obtruded themselves, and brought me back to earth. Would that, by sharing, I could lessen them !

That equality of temper, and cheerfulness of mind, on which you have so often congratulated me, is owing more, perhaps, to a happy natural temperament, than to those pious principles to which you ascribe it.

But, though cheerfulness cannot always be maintained, amidst the unavoidable evils of life, there is a peace that may be ours, even while struggling with its heaviest misfortunes ; a peace—the concomitant of virtue, which religion

alone can give, and only guilt take entirely away.

The great foundation of this invaluable treasure, must be laid in just apprehensions of the divine nature and government. If we consider ourselves as placed by chance in a fatherless world, condemned to subsist desolate and forlorn, a few short years, yet crowded with evils, conscious of desires that must never be indulged, of hopes that can never be accomplished, of wishes that will never be fulfilled; ignorant alike of our nature and origin, of our present interest, and future destination; continually offending against the light of conscience, yet knowing no higher rule by which to conduct ourselves; living without comfort, dying without hope;—what peace—what inward satisfaction, can such a destitute being possess?

But

But if we believe, that we are the offspring of a great and good God, who, by his essential attributes, is present in all places, directing all events, and carrying on, by infinite wisdom, the plan of his divine government to complete perfection ; if we believe, that he hath placed us here as on a theatre, where our dispositions must be improved, our actions displayed, and our virtues tried, in order to a future retribution ; if we know, that, superadded to the feeble glimmerings of nature, he hath caused the glorious light of revelation to arise, to dispel our fears, confirm our hopes, and lead our desires to suitable objects ; if we are assured, that all events here, shall combine to prepare us for eternal felicity hereafter,—how can we be otherwise than cheerful—serene, and happy ?

Let us habituate our minds, my dearest Julia, to the prospect of that fast ap-

proaching future, the awful importance of which will cause the heaviest of our present evils to seem light. Yes, my exalted friend, the time is coming, when piety and benevolence like yours, shall be rewarded with that felicity, which, even in this world, they in some measure anticipate; and which shall be the portion of the truly good, through ages that shall never end. Amen, prays your affectionate

MARIA HERBERT.

LETTER XLIV.

Miss Greville to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

Immediately after dispatching my last letter, I retired to the garden, to reflect on the various occurrences of the day. I enumerated every little circumstance that
could

could increase my admiration of the delicacy and generosity of Sir Charles. I accused myself of caprice and ingratitude. I looked forward to the melancholy prospects my unhappy father's conduct supplied. I reflected on the transport of relieving distress, encouraging merit, and rewarding industry, which Providence seemed now to offer me. Above all, I deeply felt the cruel disappointment my final rejection would occasion to the affectionate, the disinterested Sir Charles; and if I could not reason myself into a passion for him, I resolved to try at least to conquer my indifference. At that instant, Maria, I chanced to turn my eyes towards the laurel. It appeared to be drooping; and, would you believe it, my weak heart smote me with something like self-reproach, for daring to think of violating those sacred engagements, which it had formerly witnessed; and which, alas! are now forgotten by him, whose

constancy could alone have rendered them binding.

Bewildered in the variety of my own thoughts, I was sitting in the alcove, with my head resting on my hand, and my eyes fixed on the laurel, when I was startled with the sudden appearance of Sir Charles. Supposing he must have been detained by company, till a much later hour, I was about to enquire the cause of this very unexpected visit, when, looking up, I perceived a seriousness in his countenance, so unusual, that it alarmed me. He entered with a paper in his hand, and looking very grave,—“At length, Miss Greville, said he, fortune is become my friend, and has supplied me with means of accomplishing my long-wished revenge. Little did I suspect the ingenuous, the guileless, the amiable Julia, could be capable of such deep-laid schemes, such consummate art, such

such concealment,"—"Bless me! Sir Charles, interrupted I, what is it you mean?" "I mean, Madam, that, to a woman capable of thinking and writing in this manner, I never can form any pretensions."

I was extremely agitated, as well as perplexed, by the solemnity of his manner. I rose eagerly to seize the paper; but he gently with-held it, and taking hold of my hand—"Before I entrust you with this proof of your treason, continued he, you must promise that you will immediately restore it; and, as a pledge of your good faith, allow me to detain this dear hand as a hostage. "I will promise nothing, said I, with the same air of gaiety, which is demanded in so insolent a manner." "Ah, Julia! replied he, archly, have not I a right to demand this? Recollect your own behaviour, and say, if I have nothing to hope from

from your generosity, am I not entitled at least to claim from your justice, the same confidence in my honour, which I reposed in yours?" "Well, well, said I, smiling, I am your prisoner, and must not stand upon terms." He held out the paper. Judge of my confusion and astonishment, when I beheld a copy of verses, which I had written just after my first visit to poor Mrs Clifford, and transcribed this morning, intending to inclose them to my friend, for whose partial and indulgent eye alone they were designed.

"Good heavens ! Sir Charles, exclaimed I, how came this paper into your possession?" "I believe the favour was not intended for me, Madam ; and I must thank fortune, and not Miss Greville, for bestowing it upon me." He then turned up the other side of the paper, and shewed it addressed to himself.

To

To explain this, I must inform you, that having received some books from Sir Charles, which I was about to return, and solicit more, I wrote him a card for that purpose ; but being called away, on returning I addressed the cover, inclosing the verses, to Sir Charles, and sent the card meant for him to the post-office, without once suspecting my mistake, as they were both folded in the same manner.

Abashed and disconcerted, I knew not what apology to make. Sir Charles perceived my embarrassment, and hastened to relieve me. “ Most amiable, most admirable Julia ! said he, why, why should you blush, for having discovered to me those superior talents with which Heaven has endued you, and which you ought rather to blush for having so long concealed ? Who of all the human race is so disposed to love, to admire them ?—

Yet

Yet it was kindly done : Already the distance between us is too great, and you generously concealed what you knew must increase it, and overwhelm me with self-abasement.

“ Ah ! would to Heaven, continued he, passionately, that it were permitted me to fulfil every wish of that tender, that benevolent heart ! that, without incurring the suspicion of interested motives—the censures of a world, whose illiberal maxims I detest”—here he paused, “ At least, dearest Miss Greville, continued he, deign to point out to me those children of misfortune, whom you so tenderly commiserate ; and teach me, by your example, not only to relieve, but to sympathize with them, and ‘make the sorrows of my fellow-creatures my own.’ ”

This affecting conversation, and the recollection of those which had formerly
passed

passed between Rivers and me in this very spot, so entirely overpowered my weak spirits, that I burst into tears. Wholly at a loss to guess the cause of my agitation, Sir Charles remained motionless with surprise.

“I am so little accustomed to tenderness like yours, Sir Charles, said I, that you must not wonder at seeing me affected by it in this manner. Time will render your goodness more familiar to me ; perhaps enable me to reward it.”

“My gentlest, my sweetest angel, cried he, transported with joy, I ought not—I will not desire more. Be assured, loveliest Julia, your happiness is dearer to me than life ; and I can never taste felicity, that is in any measure incompatible with yours.” The appearance of my father put an end to this interesting discourse. At his desire, Sir Charles
sent

sent an apology to the Grove, and we passed the evening most agreeably. Sir Charles, on this occasion, discovered a vivacity, which rendered his conversation peculiarly entertaining, and, with his usual delicacy, shunned embarrassing me, by any particularity of manner when addressing me. We did not part till late; but I felt so little inclination to sleep, that I transcribed the verses inclosed, as I could not doubt of your desire to see them.

I confess to you, my beloved friend, I feel my heart at times so desolate and depressed, that I almost wish it could again be deeply and tenderly interested. Yet I tremble, lest Sir Charles, by his singular merit, should again rivet my affections too strongly to a world, to which at present I feel little attachment, and which is ever most dangerous, when most alluring.

Our

Our fears and our sorrows are always proportioned to our love. Why then should I voluntarily subject myself to the cruel inquietudes, which must ever, in minds of much sensibility, attend that engrossing passion? Adieu, adieu.

JULIA GREVILLE.

The COMPLAINT. An ELEGY.

Ah! why has Heaven condemn'd me to sustain
This grief, for ills I never can relieve?
Why must I only weep the wretches pain,
Prove the warm wish, yet want the pow'r to give?

Why mark true merit immaturely fade,
Uncherished, unprotected, and unknown!
Lost in obscurity's remotest shade,
The buds of genius blasted soon as blown!

Why must I see unpitied, unredrest,
The cruel injuries of wanton pow'r?
Forc'd to conceal the anguish of my breast;
Denied to succour whom I must deplore.

Yet Heaven can witness, I ne'er wish'd for wealth;
Nor the gay follies of a foreign soil:
Ne'er sacrific'd to pleasure, peace and health;
Nor indolence preferr'd to useful toil.

Mine was the wish, far from the world to plan
The moral tale, instructive of my kind;
To point the best pursuits of social man,
And form, by stealth, the uncorrupted mind:

Unnotic'd, to convey the prompt supply;
To cheer dull Poverty's obscure abode:
To read the language of the grateful eye,
Catch the warm praise, and point, as due, to God:

Of youth the kind affections to engage;
To nourish tender infancy with bread;
With kind compassion cherish feeble age,
And give that cordial which I yet may need.

Yet say, is happiness to wealth allied?
Had Heaven so will'd, it ne'er had been assign'd
To gratify the wish of pamper'd pride,
Or work the purpose of the invidious mind.

To tempt the virgin from her parents arms;
To break the sacred bonds of mutual faith;
To satiate frantic Jealousy's alarms,
And glut the thirst of fell Revenge with death.

Hence,

Hence, vain complaints ! hence, and be heard no
more ;

Heaven's wondrous plan, to Heaven is only known.
Perhaps endow'd with affluence and pow'r,
That insolence I hate, had been my own.

With pleasure circled, and secure from fear,
Perhaps a stranger to each softer tie,
I ne'er had known compassion's cordial tear,
The thousand cordial sweets of sympathy.

Though wealth by Providence has been denied,
Fair is my lot, no niggard bliss is mine ;
For I can heal the wounds of honest pride,
And teach revenge its purpose to resign.

Can cherish modest merit with applause,
With kindness sooth the apprehensive mind ;
Can plead with boldness virtue's injured cause ;
Or hide the frailties of my feeble kind ;

And oft the anguish of the bursting heart,
The gentle voice of friendship will restrain ;
A mite to indigence will joy impart ;
A pitying sigh some respite give to pain ;

A cheerful tale deceive the weight of years ;
A doubtful hope the trembling tear suspend ;
A welcome look dispel a lover's fears ;
A simple sonnet please a partial friend ;

And these are mine ; nor I these gifts despise ;
Eternal Power ! to whom each gift I owe,
With-holdeven from my prayers the means of vice,
Nor let my wish fulfill'd procure my woe.

LETTER XLV.

Miss Greville to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

As we had fixed Tuesday for visiting Mrs Clifford, Sir Charles came this morning at the appointed hour, and brought along with him a beautiful gray pad, elegantly caparisoned, of which he begged my acceptance. " I do not like the horse you commonly ride, Miss Greville, said he, I have twice observed him very unmanageable ; and as I am assured this one is perfectly well trained, it will save Mrs Greville anxiety on your account, if you will do me the favour to
make

make trial of it." My mother thanked Sir Charles very warmly for this delicate proof of his attention. But I fear, Maria, I did not receive it with so good a grace as I ought to have done. I could not help feeling uneasy under the weight of so many obligations..

Sir Charles perceived my embarrassment, and on my mother's quitting the room, came up to me, and taking my hand, "However noble minded you are in other respects, Miss Greville, said he, you must forgive my presumption, if I venture to say, that your notions on this subject are neither so just nor liberal, as might be expected from one capable of thinking in the manner you do on every other. You would not surely wish to deprive me of the greatest pleasure of my life, that of obliging you? And then (with a sly look) I am superior to you in true generosity; for I can not only submit cheer-

I 3.

fully

fully to be obliged by the friend I esteem, but I declare I would with transport receive from her hands, a gift a thousand times more valuable than any in the power of fortune to bestow."

"Well, well, Sir Charles, replied I, I hope one day to be revenged on you in your own way, by heaping obligations on your head, as well as to convince you, that I am not averse to being obliged, though I do not like, as now, to feel myself an absolute bankrupt."

We set out on our little tour, and Sir Charles seemed quite delighted with the praises I bestowed on my new favourite. We found Mrs Clifford at work as formerly. After having conversed some time, she begged permission to speak with me alone in the other room. She then asked me eagerly, whether it was not to Sir Charles Mortimer she was indebted
for

for the letter and bill she had received when I was last with her? I frankly confessed it was, and allowed her to return alone into the room, that she might make her acknowledgments to her benefactor without witnesses.

A few minutes afterwards, on entering the parlour, little Clara came running towards me, and clasping her arms round my neck, as I stooped to kiss her, "Will you be my t'other Mamma, Miss Greville, said she, and I will love you as well as my own? You know we must love good people, and I am sure you are one of them, for Mamma told me so yesterday."

I placed the sweet child on my lap, when, observing the chain of my watch, that hung over my skirt, she began to examine the seals and trinkets. I took out
the

the watch, and seating her on the floor, gave her the watch, to amuse her.

After playing with it some time, Mrs Clifford, afraid she would break the glass, took it from the child, to deliver it to me; when, happening to cast her eye on one of the seals, impressed with the family-arms, she instantly changed colour, and reaching it to me, “Miss Greville, cried she, with a faltering voice, may I presume to ask how you came by that seal?”

“I got it from my father, Madam, replied I; it is the family-arms, and”—
 “Great God! cried she, aloud, for what am I reserved?” and instantly fainted away. I flew to support her, and, with the assistance of Sir Charles, carried her to the couch, where she lay for several minutes without signs of life, in spite of every art we could use for her recovery.

The

The cries of the innocent Clara at length brought her to her senses. She pressed her to her bosom, she bedewed her with her tears, and exclaimed, in the anguish of her soul, “O wretched child, of a most wretched mother, what will become of thee! abandoned to the mercy of such a world, without fortune, parents, or one friend to protect thee,—an outcast from society—a reproach to her who bore thee!”——

Sir Charles and I remained thunder-struck with amazement. At length, recovering a little composure;—“Oh! pardon, Miss Greville, pardon, Sir Charles, the effect of shame, surprise, and unutterable sorrow. The resemblance of Miss Greville to him who is the guilty cause of all my misery, struck me the first moment I beheld her. Her voice often startled me, even after her name had convinced me of my error, in supposing her
nearly

nearly allied to him.—Ah! would to Heaven I had still remained ignorant of the whole extent of my guilt, and misery!”

“O my God! exclaimed she, raising her clasped hands and eyes in an agony of grief, forgive my secret offence; for thou knowest it was not presumptuously committed! Oh! that it might please thee to deliver me at once from this load of shame and infamy, and that existence which it will for ever embitter!”

I was now in no condition to assist the unfortunate stranger. This new proof of my father's licentious wickedness shocked me so much, that my senses wholly forsook me, and I fell lifeless into the arms of Sir Charles. Never was there a scene of deeper distress than that he was now called to witness. I knew not in what terms to offer that consolation to Mrs Clifford, of which I stood in the utmost

most need myself. I could only mingle my sighs and tears with hers, whilst our mournful silence sufficiently expressed the mutual sympathy, and bitter anguish of our souls.

I begged her to inform me, by what means she became acquainted with my father's arms; when, stepping to her cabinet, she brought me a letter, written the day before their pretended marriage, and which, in his hurry, he had certainly impressed, by mistake, with the seal that bore his arms. She said, she had often been at a great loss to understand the meaning of one sentence in her father's letter, "that there was no such person in the world as her pretended husband;" and that, on seeing me, and being told my name was Greville, she recollected, that the Lord formerly mentioned (doubtless the infamous Rochdale), called Mr Clifford by that name, the day they visited her

her together, and Mr Clifford gave him a hearty curse on the occasion ; but that she took little notice of the affair, supposing it some jest.

After saying every thing in my power to comfort this unhappy lady, and assuring her, that her peculiar misfortunes only served to increase the tenderness of that friendship I felt for her, Sir Charles and I took our leave; and I returned to Harwood, in a state of such distress and agitation, that I was obliged to beg his excuse, and go immediately to bed, from whence I am but just arisen, and feel myself so much disordered, that I must lay aside my pen.

My dearest Maria ! may your heart for ever remain a stranger to that complicated anguish with which mine is overwhelmed ! May you never know a sorrow that destroys all sympathy, that
excludes

excludes all hope, that admits of no consolation ! Such are my present feelings with regard to the wretched author of my being. Cruel necessity ! to be forced to bestow the revered name of Parent, on one, whose vices, justice, compassion, virtue, require you to abhor.

My heart's dear friend, farewell.

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER XLVI.

Miss Herbert to Miss Greville.

London.

Tell me not, my beloved Julia, that your sorrows destroy all sympathy, exclude all hope, and admit of no consolation. My friend, this is the language of despondent grief, not pious resignation. Your sorrows, indeed, are both exquisite, and highly aggravated ; but, while we

continue to pursue the path of rectitude, let us not be discouraged by the difficulties with which it is encompassed; nor, while we hold steadily our allegiance to virtue, let us abandon that hope which is its best support.

Many circumstances have unfortunately combined to lead your unhappy father into a life of expence and dissipation. Evil habits form a chain, which neither sense, nor reflection, can at once dissolve. An hour may yet arrive—I trust in Heaven it is near! when these will unite their force, to free him from the tyranny of his passions; and, by shewing him the whole enormity of his crimes, teach him the necessity of fleeing every temptation to the commission of them.

This painful subject baffles every effort of friendship to relieve you. Seek relief,

relief, my Julia, from that Being, who, in times of greatest extremity, often brings us unhop'd deliverance; and is alike powerful and willing to assist those who place their whole confidence in his aid.

There is a point beyond which the human mind cannot suffer; and there are bounds also, beyond which human calamity cannot extend. Reflect, my beloved friend, with humble gratitude reflect, how far you are yet from reaching the verge of that frightful gulph. Reason, religion, friendship, and conscious rectitude, are yours. Open your heart to the consolations which these supply. And, above all, let the consideration of the shortness of life, mitigate the severity of its sufferings, and the assured hope of that which is to come, teach you to rise superior to them.

However moralists have disagreed, with regard to the source of this sentiment, it is universally allowed, that we derive some relief, from comparing our own, with the sufferings of those around us. How various ! how complicated are the trials appointed to the human race ! I cannot describe what I have felt since hearing of the distress of a worthy family in this neighbourhood.

Mr Sanby, having lost his eldest son in a fever, wrote to his youngest, a lieutenant in the same regiment with Lord Rivers, entreating him to sell out, and return to be the support of his afflicted parents, whose sole surviving child he then was. The young gentleman, though with much reluctance, quitted the army, and returned to England. He acquainted his father with his arrival, and fixed a day for returning home. The preceding evening, having appointed several
of

of his young companions to meet him at the tavern, a trifling dispute arose. Heated with wine, he defended his opinion with warmth. His most intimate friend opposed it with the same violence of passion. The lie was given—each flew to his sword, and Sanby fell by the hand of his dearest friend,—who loved him, and whose life he had once saved, at the risk of his own.

Nothing presents us with so striking a proof of the weakness of human reason, and inconsistency of human conduct, as the practice of submitting the rectitude of a man's actions, and the justness of his opinions, to be determined by the skill of his arm, or the temper of his sword.

One really knows not whether most to pity or blame that person, whom one sees alarmed at the approach of the slightest malady; ransacking all nature to procure

cure health; terrified at the mention of death; and eager to preserve that life, which, for the sake of an imaginary affront, a haughty look, or unguarded expression, he, without once reflecting on the awful consequence, madly throws away.

Farewell, my dear afflicted friend!
May you be sustained under all your trials; and, in due time, happily delivered from them, prays devoutly,

Yours unalterably,

MARIA HERBERT.

LETTER XLVII.

Miss Greville to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

Alas, my dear friend! there is no hope of deliverance from my sufferings. They
increase

increase every hour, and almost drive me to despair.

Last night, the servant came and told my mother, that a gentleman had been twice that day to enquire for my father ; and finding he was not expected home till next day, had desired her to deliver a letter he left into my father's own hands.

My dear mother's heart instantly caught the alarm, and presaged some new misfortune. My father and Lord Rochdale arrived to dinner ; she desired my father to step with me into her dressing room, and directed me where to find the letter. Having delivered it, I was about to retire, when, with a stern voice, he commanded me to stay.

Having read the letter, he loaded the author of it with the most dreadful execrations ;

crations; and then, addressing himself to me, "I have too long indulged you, cried he, in delaying a marriage, which might have saved me from this insult. My creditors are no longer to be satisfied with promises. Lord Rochdale has generously engaged to lend me a sum sufficient to extricate me from all my difficulties, as soon as you become his wife. On you, therefore, depends, not only your father's credit, but his life; for, by Heaven, I will never submit to the shame of confinement. And remember, Julia,—for the last time, remember, that unless you chuse to see me carried to prison before your eyes, or worse—you must, this very day, be explicit with Lord Rochdale, and fix one, to put an end to his expectations, and my perplexities."

My horror, during this speech, deprived me of utterance. I sunk down on a chair, and for some minutes remained
like

like one thunderstruck. When I recovered my senses, my first impulse was to follow my father, throw myself at his feet, and implore his compassion. But a moment's reflection served to convince me, that, in the present state of his mind, this would only redouble his resentment against me. The thought of adding to my mother's affliction, by communicating my own, was dreadful; yet how to conceal it, I knew not. In the midst of these distracting perplexities, the bell rang for dinner; and, summoning all my resolution, I returned to the parlour.

The moment I entered, "What is the matter, my dear, cried my mother,"—then stopping, as if afraid to ask, "Pray, take a little wine, you seem ready to faint."

"I shall soon be better," said I, seating myself at table; and struggling to suppress

suppress those sorrows, with which my heart was almost bursting. My mother, fearful of increasing my agitation, remained silent; but the detestable Lord Rochdale made my indisposition a pretence for a thousand officious attentions, that increased it every moment.

After dinner, my father told my mother, he wished to talk with her a few minutes in her dressing-room. They retired; and so great was my horror at being left with Lord Rochdale, that, in spite both of prudence and good manners, I rose to quit the room.

He prevented me, by stepping between me and the door; and, assuming all the respect and suppleness of the most humble admirer, conjured me to hear him on a subject that engrossed his whole soul.

Unable

Unable to restrain the anguish of mine—"My Lord, said I, hear me, while, for the last time, I assure you, that neither solicitation nor compulsion, shall ever prevail with me to act, in contradiction both to my judgment and my feelings. What dependence could you have on the conduct of a wife who was capable of deceiving you as a mistress? I will not deceive you, my Lord. I never can love, and therefore never will marry you. Reflect how cruel, how dishonourable a part, then, it would be to irritate my father against me, by forcing me to make the same declaration to him. And if you indeed feel for me that tenderness you profess, shew yourself worthy of my gratitude, by abandoning at once a pursuit, which may make me still more miserable, but never can bring happiness to you."

Quite

Quite overpowered with vexation, I retired to a window, and burst into tears. He seemed much affected by my distress; but, alas! far from doing any thing to relieve it, he only redoubled his odious professions; till, quite exhausted with his prayers, vows, and remonstrances, I rudely broke from him, and left the room. As soon as I reached my own, I gave vent to my intolerable anguish. My dear mother joined me; and we spent two hours in deploring our misfortunes, without being able to fix on any thing likely to alleviate or remove them.

Encouraged by the compassion and indulgence of this dear Parent, I am resolved, at all events, to repeat to-morrow to my father, the same declaration I have just made Lord Rochdale. But, Oh! Maria, the dreadful thought of what may be the consequence of such a disappointment, to a man of such a violent temper as my
 unhappy

unhappy father ! That fearful hint too—
 May Heaven guide me !—for every way
 I look, misery presents itself to my view,
 and I see no way left to escape.

In continuation :

My father, and Lord Rochdale, are
 gone together ; and I shall at least have
 one day left to determine on the most
 prudent way of conducting myself in this
 dreadful dilemma, as they return not
 till Wednesday.

My mother thinks it would be advise-
 able, that I should pay a visit, for a few
 weeks, to my god-mother Lady Linster,
 till the first violence of the tempest is o-
 ver. But how can I bear to leave her
 exposed to all its fury ? No, Maria, du-
 ty and affection both plead for my re-
 maining with my tenderly beloved pa-
 rent, to share, at least, if I cannot shield
 her from calamity.

O that you were here to aid me with your advice! My own reason is insufficient to direct me, and my mother listens to affection alone in the counsel she gives. May Heaven speedily relieve me from the accumulated sorrows, which overwhelm your afflicted friend,

JULIA GREVILLE.

LETTER XLVIII.

*To Miss Herbert from Miss Greville's
Maid.*

MADAM,

I am commanded, by my dear young Lady, who is extremely ill, to inform you, that last night Mr Greville fell from his horse; and, being in liquor, was so dreadfully bruised, that he expired in great distress this morning.

Worthy

Worthy Mrs Greville is very poorly ; but she is so accustomed to affliction, that she bears it better than Miss. Pray, dear Madam, write to her without delay : it will give her much comfort ; for she is never so happy, as when she receives your letters ; and, at present, she stands in need of every support your friendship can afford her. I am, Madam, with due respect,

Your very humble servant,

SARAH DORMER.

LETTER XLIX.

Miss Herbert to Miss Greville.

London.

Never, dearest Julia, never, till this moment, did I feel difficulty, in addressing the friend of my heart. What can I suggest to relieve yours from the into-

lerable anguish with which it is overwhelmed?

It is by such awful dispensations, and in hours of such peculiar darkness as the present, that the Almighty teaches his feeble creatures, to raise their eyes from second causes, and what they call fortuitous events, to him, the great First Cause, and Supreme Governor of the universe. It is then that their virtues are made perfect by discipline; that their faith triumphs over the world: it is then that the most enlightened of the human race are brought to a feeling sense of their own ignorance; that, with humility, they adore what they cannot comprehend, and cry out, in the words of a truly great person, "Man is error and ignorance; Being of beings! have mercy on me!"

Dearest Julia, seek for consolation, where alone it is to be found, by the broken

ken

ken heart, and wounded spirit. Pass over the present disorderly scene ; recal your wandering thoughts from the gloomy images it presents, and look forward to that grand consummation, when light shall arise out of darkness, order out of confusion, good be educed from evil, and harmony, and happiness, and perfection, prevail through all the works of God.

I will not attempt a long letter at present ; neither will I injure your friendship, by supposing it possible that you, or Mrs Greville, can be hurt by the natural expression of my father's. He entreats you to draw on him immediately for whatever sums you may want, to defray the expences of the present melancholy occasion. He will write soon to your dear mother, and offer his advice with regard to her future plans.

You may believe I long to hear the particulars of your father's death ; and you cannot doubt that I am, with every affection of my heart, your real and sympathizing friend,

MARIA HERBERT.

LETTER I.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Miss Greville.

Grove.

With the respect due to affliction like yours, and the sympathy which flows from the most tender friendship, permit me, dearest Miss Greville, to intrude even on those moments which are justly devoted to sorrow, to warn you of the danger of giving way to its extreme violence ; and to remind you, that it is not only your own health which is now at stake, but the health and peace of your afflicted

afflicted mother, the comfort and happiness of all who know and love you.

Accuse me not of presumption, if I entreat you sometimes to leave your mother's apartment, and walk into the garden, for the benefit of fresh air. Such close confinement, in this hot season, must be extremely hurtful to a constitution so delicate as yours. Dearest Miss Greville, excuse my earnestness on this subject: you cannot imagine how deeply it interests me.

Though the officious and impertinent visits of common acquaintance, are peculiarly irksome to a mind wholly occupied with its sorrows; yet I trust the tender cares of real friendship, will be rather soothing to yours. Permit me, then, to enjoy one of its most valuable privileges, that of lessening the weight of calamity, by sharing in the grief it occasions; and
of

of assuring you in person, that none more deeply feels, or more ardently wishes to alleviate yours, than your faithful, admiring, and devoted

CHARLES MORTIMER.

LETTER LI.

Miss Greville to Sir Charles Mortimer.

Harwood.

The share you generously take, in the distress of this afflicted family, cannot fail to render your visit extremely welcome to them.

Be assured, dear Sir, the many instances of your humane and delicate attention to us, afford us the only consolation, of which our present sorrows can admit, and excite the most sincere esteem and gratitude of,

Your obliged humble servant,

JULIA GREVILLE.

LET-

LETTER LII.

Miss Greville to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

At length, Maria, my kind, my compassionate friend; at length, I am able to resume that pen, which, for several weeks, my own, and still more, the distress of my dear suffering parent, has obliged me to abandon. O, my friend! how amiable is her patience! how exemplary her fortitude! how truly admirable her whole conduct!

How few characters, like hers, bear the test of long acquaintance, and varied observation! and still command the deep regard of a ripened judgment, which they formerly obtained from a youthful mind, easily struck, and prone to admire! She does not merely maintain the admiration

admiration she has formerly engaged, but grows more and more venerable by every new attitude, and every added year.

It is impossible to express to you my grateful sense of your generous friendship, and soothing tendernefs. Think not, my best friend, that we would pain a heart of such sensibility as your father's, by declining to accept of his kind offer, were we in immediate want of money. But Lord Belmount, that uncle, whose favour was forfeited by one parent, on account of the misconduct of the other, ceases to extend his resentment beyond the grave. His lawyer paid my mother a visit yesterday, and presented her, in his name, with a bill for five hundred pounds, with the promise of more hereafter. As my mother considers this as part of her fortune, she made no scruple to accept of it, and made me return a card of proper acknowledgment

to

to my uncle ; informing him, at the same time, of the whole extent of our misfortunes. I will not conceal from you the miserable state of our affairs. The creditors, in compassion to my mother, have allowed us to continue at Harwood till the ensuing term, when every thing must be fold off. Something must be done for the support of my dear afflicted parent, who I really think cannot long struggle under the weight of such complicated misfortunes. As my uncle appears, by this late action, to be well disposed towards us, I think of applying to him, by whose interest, I am confident, a small pension might be obtained from Government for my mother.

My grandfather distinguished himself, by some very important services during the last war, for which he demanded no other reward, than the confidence and esteem of his Royal Master, which he always

ways enjoyed. Till my mother's ill-fated marriage, Lord Belmont doted on her; but since that time, he would never even suffer her name to be mentioned before him. A small matter would be sufficient for her support, at a distance from that world of which her heart is quite sick.

I am not yet able to enter on the shocking detail you require. Indeed my spirits are so depressed, that every kind of exertion is painful, in a degree hardly to be conceived but by being felt. My mother struggles to support my mind, by concealing that hopeless sorrow, which preys upon her own, and daily impairs that strength, which for some time has been sensibly declining. Continue, dearest Maria, to sooth me by your tenderness, when I am so weak, as not to be able to profit by your advice. In all places, in every situation, they are both
received

received with gratitude, by your truly affectionate, though afflicted friend,

JULIA GREVILLE.

LETTER LIII.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr Belford.

Grove.

Dear BELFORD,

An accident of a most shocking nature has reduced the unfortunate family at Harwood to the greatest extremity, and involved your friend in fresh perplexity. A few days ago, Mr Greville fell from his horse, and expired in great agonies. The creditors have met, and informed me, that the estate must be brought to an immediate sale. Now, indeed, I should feel the highest pleasure that wealth can bestow, did I not fear to oppress the gentle heart of my Julia with fresh obligations, and dread appearing,

by conferring them, to lay claim to those returns I ardently wish, but never, by such means, would obtain. In truth, if I know my own heart, it is actuated by superior and disinterested motives; by the wish alone of relieving, from the most depressing sorrows, those, whose merit and sensibility must render their weight doubly unsupportable.

Could any thing add to my esteem, my admiration of this sweet suffering angel, it would be the patient dignity with which she supports her misfortunes, the fortitude with which she rises superior to them, and at times seems to forget them altogether, in order to support her mother, whose long acquaintance with adversity, has not rendered her less sensible to her afflictions, though less able than formerly to struggle with them.

Oh

Oh Belford ! how shall I conduct myself ? This is surely no time for urging my suit. Yet may not that delicacy lead me too far, which would impose absolute silence ? I am distracted and bewildered in the variety of my own thoughts. Cool and impartial as you are, direct me, my dearest friend, for I am utterly incapable of determining for myself.

Though not urgent, I ought surely to be explicit, at a time when this lovely young creature, deprived of her natural protector, sees herself about to be exposed to all those outrages, to which beauty, innocence, and poverty subject her helpless sex ; abandoned to the dangers of a world, the more hazardous, that it is unsuspected, the more seductive, that it is unknown.

M 2

Yes,

Yes, Belford! conscious of the rectitude of my own sentiments, I will once more avow them to her, and try to discover, through modesty, (its only veil), whether her gentle heart sympathises in the tender affection of mine.

Wonder not that I rest all my hopes of happiness on the success of my present pursuit. The early disgust I conceived, for what are called *fashionable pleasures*, and which the best of fathers taught me to regard, in the juster light of ruinous vices, has preserved my taste for elegant and virtuous enjoyments unvitiated. None appear to me worthy of that name, in which the heart takes no share, and which cannot stand the test of reason, or the search of reflection.

Hitherto the women I have conversed with, among the circles of the gay and polite, seem, by their frivolous pursuits, artificial

ficial manners, and trifling conversation, better calculated to inspire contempt, than awaken tenderness. What happiness can a man expect from the society of a woman, whose whole study is to gain admiration, and who does not even appear to be desirous of inspiring any other sentiment? Can one expect, that the force of habit, and usual bent of the mind, are so entirely to be changed by matrimony, as to convert a gay, thoughtless, dissipated woman of fashion, into a sober, reasonable, affectionate companion? or that one accustomed to live in a crowd, will be disposed to relish the quiet pleasures, or discharge the important duties, of a domestic character?

Till I had the happiness of seeing Miss Greville, I never even formed a wish to marry. She alone, of all her sex whom I have yet known, seems capable of forming the tenderest of all connections, and

of endearing that sacred and blissful union, by sharing cordially in the sweet satisfaction she bestows. Oh Belford! I can conceive no higher earthly bliss, than to possess the esteem of so elevated a mind, the affection of so gentle a heart.

What transport would not such a mistress exalt—what sorrow would not such a friend alleviate! But I forget you are no lover, and that complaisance alone can make you listen, with attention, to the often repeated subject, which wholly engrosses,

Your faithful friend,

CHARLES MORTIMER.

LET-

LETTER LIV.

Miss Greville to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

Maria! to what variety of distress am I doomed? Must the necessary trials inflicted by that Being, who only chastens to amend, and punishes to reform, be embittered by the cruelty and malevolence of our fellow-creatures? Ah! is it not enough to sink under the pressure of poverty and affliction? must the weight be increased to anguish, by contempt and insult?

But let me reply to your enquiry concerning the death of my father. Would to Heaven, that I could draw a veil over that, and all his errors for ever! It was the consequence of his usual intemperance. On occasion of Lord Rochdale's return.

return to the country, they had dined together at a tavern in ——; and being much heated with wine, had ridden very hard, as appeared by their horses.

About a quarter of a mile from hence, my father's horse started, and run off; and his foot being entangled in the stirrup, he was dragged home in the most miserable condition. My mother being in bed, was alarmed by the noise, and hastily got up. When she entered the room where he was lying on a couch, she gave a loud shriek, and fainted away. The sight of his wife seemed to redouble his agonies; he strove to speak, but could not. After a few minutes, he eagerly grasped my hand, and, with great difficulty, articulated these few words:——
 “Julia,—my child—forgive—Oh forgive—I have miserably injured—deceived, ruined!”—Here the violence of his emotions put a stop to his utterance; the
 most

most frightful convulsions succeeded, and, in half an hour, put an end to his existence. Maria ! my tears blind me—I can no more—Oh ! he was, he was my father !

The wretched companion of his debauch seemed greatly affected with the sight of my mother's distress, and my own. He sent every day to enquire after us, and came himself, as soon as decency would permit, to wait on us. He continued to visit us oftener than I thought consistent with propriety, my very delicate situation considered ; and one day, on meeting Sir Charles at Harwood, betrayed such marks of jealousy and chagrin, as could not escape penetration like his. At parting, he dropped some hints, which, though conveyed in the most artful language, were sufficient both to offend and alarm me. I gave orders to the servants, in Sir Charles's hearing, to be denied next time

Lord

Lord Rochdale called. And would you believe it, Maria, this audacious Libertine had the insolence to write to me on the occasion ; and after complaining of my indifference, and reproaching me with my ingratitude for his constancy and affection, to insinuate, that I was less cruel, where my own inclination influenced me. I was so provoked with this treatment, that I sent back his letters unopened, and persisted in refusing his visits ; when, last Sunday, on returning from church, he had the audacity to follow the carriage which I had borrowed from Mrs Guilford for that purpose, and coming up, just as it stopped, rudely seized my hand, on pretence of helping me out, and followed me into the parlour.

Surprise and indignation kept me silent. He seated himself near me, and, with the most unblushing impudence, and insolent cruelty, told me,
that

that as I was now without either fortune or friends, he hoped I would no longer reject his proposals, nor refuse the protection of a man who adored me, who would lay his fortune at my feet, and give me the sole disposal both of that and its master. On saying this, he again attempted to take my hand, which I snatched from him, and rising hastily, and pulling the bell, desired the servant to enquire whether Lord Rochdale's carriage was in waiting. Then turning to him, with as much composure as I could command, "My Lord, said I, were I not sufficiently humbled under the weight of my misfortunes, your Lordship's behaviour this morning, would make me feel their whole bitterness, by shewing me what barbarous liberties, the gay and the prosperous think themselves entitled to take, with the indigent and distressed."

A shower of tears, which I vainly laboured to suppress, now burst from my eyes. The unfeeling Rochdale continued to increase both my grief and resentment, by painting, in still stronger terms, my destitute situation.

No longer able to support such treatment, I rallied my scattered spirits, and replied to him, with a look abundantly expressive of my contempt, "Poor, friendless, and afflicted I may be; but I trust the load of self-reproach shall never be added to the weight of those trials with which Heaven may see it necessary to exercise me.

"May you, my Lord, for the future, learn more respect for the daughter of him you called your friend; and may you never experience anguish like that you have inflicted on one who pities
whilst

whilst she condemns, and forgives whilst she reproaches you."

So saying, I quitted the room; and Lord Rochdale, finding it impossible to detain me, hurried down stairs, got into his chariot, and drove from the door like lightning.

Oh Maria! how mortifying, how humiliating, is this treatment to your friend! Yet—ought not the shame to return on his head, who can thus add insult and barbarity to affliction like mine?

Ah! would to Heaven I could with honour accept the kind, the generous protector, whom Providence seems to have sent for my relief! Would to Heaven this heart, which reveres his worth, could repay his tender affection. But, Maria! it will not be. Too sacred do I hold the

marriage-vow, too highly do I esteem Sir Charles Mortimer, ever, at the altar, to profess with my lips, what my heart disavows ; and, in spite of all my efforts, to drive it thence, still, still, Maria ! the image of the faithless, the ungrateful Rivers obtrudes itself ; mingles with all my reflections, and redoubles all my woes.

The inclosed is this moment brought me. The agitation which the name of Rivers always occasions me, prevented me from observing the superscription ; and I opened it, before I perceived it was from Lord Rochdale. How mean, how despicable is vice, even under the fairest mask it can assume !

Lord Rochdale to Miss Greville.

Nothing, believe me, adorable Julia !
nothing was farther from my thoughts,
than

than to give you pain, by what passed between us this morning. That I have been so unfortunate as to displease you, must be imputed solely to the violence of a passion which transports me beyond the bounds of prudence. I feel myself miserable under the weight of your resentment. I cannot exist without you. Deign then, most charming of your sex! to bury what is past in oblivion. Consent to be mine, by the most honourable and indissoluble of all ties, and, along with the title of Countess of Rochdale, accept of the most grateful acknowledgments of the man who adores you, who dotes on you to distraction; who will never taste of pleasure, till entitled to subscribe himself,

Your fond husband,

ROCHDALE.

Miss Greville to Lord Rochdale.

Harwood.

My LORD,

I am duly sensible of the honour you intend me, but utterly incapable of making the return you wish. May the title of Countess of Rochdale be bestowed on one more deserving of your preference, more ambitious of distinction, and better calculated to make you happy, than

Your humble servant,

JULIA GREVILLE.

LETTER IV.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr Belford.

Grove.

I thank my friend for his prudent advice, which so exactly coincided with
my

my own feelings, that I had followed your plan before the arrival of your letter.

With whatever hesitation, my resolution of a formal declaration was once attended, every objection vanished, before a circumstance, that at once wounded my delicacy, and roused my indignation, to a height I hardly thought myself capable of feeling.

The contemptible, the infamous Rochdale, renewed his visits at Harwood, the instant he heard of mine being admitted there. And though I saw I had nothing to fear from him as a rival, it gave me pain to observe the uneasy restraint his conversation (most indelicately particular) imposed on the amiable Julia. Unable always to conceal her disgust, she expressed her dislike of his odious gallantry one day, in a manner marked and se-

vere. Supposing she wished for an opportunity to give him a final dismissal, I arose, and took my leave; but was instantly followed by this despicable wretch, who told me, in an insulting tone, that he would no longer dispute the possession of Miss Greville, with one who he saw was not only more agreeable to her, but had probably bribed higher than he chose to do on this occasion; especially, added he, with a sarcastic smile, “as neither of us can flatter himself with being a first lover.”

Belford! think what I felt at that instant! Rage a while kept me silent; and during that important moment, reason represented at one view, all that train of dreadful consequences, which might ensue, if I gave way to my just resentment. The extreme delicacy of Miss Greville's situation, and the irreparable injury her spotless character might sustain,

tain, from a quarrel between Lord Rochdale and me, did more to repress my indignation, than any other consideration whatever. I could not, however, restrain my contempt. Fixing my eyes on him, with a look, I believe, abundantly expressive of what I felt, "There is no need, my Lord, said I, of bribing the favour of Miss Greville, since it is evident she has too much discernment to be biassed by any advantages that rank and fortune can offer, to bestow hers on an unworthy object." So saying, I flung from him, without waiting a reply. Should he ever attempt offering one, I shall take care to let him understand, that though I despise too much the maxims of false honour, ever to put my life in competition with his; yet I will never submit to hear the slightest insinuation to the disadvantage of Miss Greville, thrown out by offended pride, or mean revenge.

How

How deplorable, my friend, is that debasement in which vice plunges the human character ! Who can reflect, without horror, on the cruelty, as well as injustice, of a conduct like that of Rochdale's, who, for the momentary indulgence of unavailing resentment, would defame the reputation, and ruin the peace of a modest and amiable girl, who never injured him ; and whose only offence is a total freedom from those base and sordid passions, which would have led many, in like trying circumstances, to sacrifice the happiness of others, to their own avarice or ambition. How monstrous is that return he meditates, for honour and generosity so noble, so uncommon !

I met him coming down stairs this morning as I went up. We took no other notice of each other, than a slight bow. Before I was seated, Miss Greville, in great agitation, rung for her maid,

maid, and desired her to give positive orders, that she should be denied for the future, when Lord Rochdale called.

I could not help expressing some curiosity to know the reason of this injunction ; the more so, that she appeared in the greatest confusion and disorder. On my hinting my fears, that something in Rochdale's behaviour had offended her, a tear stole down her cheek, and, after a little hesitation,—“ Perhaps, Sir Charles, said she, I am too easily hurt,—I ought to reflect—to remember—that I am not now what I have been ;—that I am not to expect to meet in the world, with delicacy and humanity like yours. Indeed, Sir Charles, added she, withdrawing that hand which I held in mine, and bursting into tears, I did not know, till now, what a proud, what an unsubdued heart I have. But God Almighty will enable me, I trust, to subdue it.” She rose, and retired,

retired, to conceal her agitation. How happy for me, at that moment, was the absence of the wretch who occasioned it! The tears of Julia pierced my very soul, and deprived me of every feeling but rage and revenge. In a few minutes she returned, and approaching me with her usual sweetness and composure, “I shall make no apology to you, Sir, said she, with whom I wish to have no reserves, for betraying my own weakness, or the inhumanity of him who occasioned it. But let me entreat you, Sir Charles, by that friendship I value as my first blessing, never to take the slightest notice of what is past. I am confident, after my behaviour this morning, I have nothing more to fear from that of Lord Rochdale, whom I consider as below even my resentment.—“Nay, continued she, seeing me about to interrupt her, and holding out her hand, you must pledge your word to me on this occasion.” I eagerly kissed
that

that proffered hand. “ I swear, cried I, never to forget the insolence of the most daring, the most inhuman of mankind ; but for your sake—yes, most amiable Julia! for your sake to restrain the resentment, and at least delay the punishment it merits. Ah ! would to Heaven, rejoined I, it were permitted me, without wounding the delicacy of that heart, whose every sentiment I revere, to expose to that contempt he deserves, the basest, the most unworthy of mankind ! Would to Heaven, dearest Julia, that the heart I so ardently covet, could reply, without reluctance, to the fondest wishes of mine ; and confer on me a title, which none would dispute, to guard my sweetest angel from insult.”

Whilst I spoke, I perceived the tears again swell into her eyes. She heaved a deep sigh, and raising them once more to my face, “ Oh ! do not,—do not urge me more on this subject at present, said she, with

with the most affecting earnestness. I am not—believe me I am not insensible to your worth—your tenderness. But O! Sir Charles, how is it possible, that, amidst such complicated distress, my heart can admit of any other feeling than the deepest, the most depressing sorrow?”

“Your sorrows are mine, my dearest Julia, replied I, almost as much affected as herself. Never will I add to them, by a subject in any degree painful to you. Permit me only to share them, and, by confiding in my friendship, at least convince me of your esteem.”

I then changed the conversation, for one always interesting to this most amiable girl, the health of her dear mother. Insensibly the restraint, always visible in Julia's manner, when any thing particular takes place in our conversation, gave way to that sedateness and composure, which,

which, more than all her other attractions, endears her to my heart. Something must be done, and that speedily, for the relief of these deserving sufferers. I have not yet been able to fix on any plan for that purpose. All seem liable to some objection. But Heaven, I trust, will direct me, in the choice of that, which, without wounding their delicacy, may alleviate those misfortunes, which greatly afflict,

Your devoted and faithful friend,

CHARLES MORTIMER.

LETTER LVI.

Miss Greville to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

O Maria ! how painful is this sense of ever-increasing obligation ! Never, surely was there a more noble or delicate mind, than that of Sir Charles Mortimer. Ever

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since

since my father's death, he has, if possible, been more respectful to my mother, more attentive to me than formerly; but, till yesterday, never once hinted the subject of his passion. I wrote, as I proposed, to my uncle. Judge of my astonishment this morning, on receiving the following answer to my letter.

“ I know not what you mean by five hundred pounds sent by my lawyer to your mother. I never heard of your father's death till this moment, and confess it is an event which occasions me but little affliction. As your mother is now, I suppose, abundantly sensible of an error never to be repaired, I shall say nothing at present on the hateful subject. If she and her daughter can be satisfied to live in the country, where I may never hear a name I detest, you shall receive annually two hundred pounds.

“I do not chuse to apply to government, in behalf of those I will never countenance.

BELMOUNT.”

When Sir Charles called, as usual, to enquire after us, I shewed him this letter, and communicated my suspicions of the real author of my mother's present. He did not affect to deny it, but added, with a manner extremely serious and affecting, “Why, dearest Miss Greville, will you force me to have recourse to stratagems I detest? Have you not assured me of your esteem? have you not professed me your friendship? is it generous, is it even just, in you, to refuse the only proofs I can give you of mine? Is it in prosperity alone, that we are permitted to enjoy the privileges of friendship? Was it not ordained by Heaven to be the companion of adversity! Where would be the advantage of affluence, if all the

world were to think and act as you do? Are riches desirable for the purpose of mere selfish indulgence? Let us change situations, and ask your own ingenuous heart, what pleasure they could afford, if thus misapplied?

“Dearest, dearest Julia, continued he, pressing my hand to his lips, believe me, I do not wish to influence your determinations by my conduct. Not even from you, would I accept this hand, unless it were accompanied with that degree of tenderness, which alone would enable me to render you happy. But tell me,” continued he, with great emotion, and fixing his eyes on mine, which were streaming with tears, “may I not hope,—may I not flatter myself, from the exquisite sensibility, of which I daily see so many proofs, that my boundless affection, and unremitting cares to promote your felicity, joined with the esteem you generously

ly profess for me, may combine to form a sentiment so tender, as in time may ripen into love?

“ Let us not sport away our own happiness in pursuit of a phantom, an imaginary bliss, incompatible with our present state, and no where to be found. Possessed of each others esteem and confidence, can we doubt, that, with the sincere wish, Heaven will grant us the power to render each other happy? Doubt not, my amiable Julia, that, with dispositions and principles such as yours, the man you honour with your hand, if sensible of the value of such a blessing, will effectually secure, by his conduct, your tender, your grateful affection.”

“ Oh ! Sir Charles, exclaimed I, for your own sake, for mine, do not urge me to a step, which I may for ever repent. Again, let me assure you of my gratitude, my lively lasting esteem, but”—“ We

will talk no more on this subject at present," interrupted Sir Charles. "I am too happy in possessing your friendship, to risk the loss of such a blessing, by any action that might occasion you uneasiness."

Soon after, he took his leave. I told my mother the substance of what had passed between us. "My dearest Julia," said this affectionate parent, "I am conscious, that a little time must put a period to all my sorrows. My extreme weakness convinces me, that period, so long desired, draws near. After suffering so much from an unhappy marriage, can you wonder, that to see you happily settled, is my only earthly concern?"

"I would not urge you to marry any man for whom you felt dislike; but with the sentiments you entertain for Sir Charles Mortimer, and his singular merit,

rit, I think you may, nay, ought to secure yourself a protector against the dangers to which your youth, and want of fortune, will expose you.

“With gratitude and ingenuity like yours, I cannot doubt of your making all the returns to Sir Charles’s tenderness, which worth like his deserves, and virtue like yours delights to pay.

“Yet—let not regard for me influence my dearest child. Believe me, Julia, nothing on earth, besides your happiness, can now give me one moment’s concern. Consult that, my best love. If you can bring yourself to marry Sir Charles without reluctance, let me have the comfort, before I die, of bestowing you on a man, whom I really think deserving of such a treasure. If not—trust in that God, who is both able and willing to protect you, and who will himself reward that rectitude,

tude, which he at once inspires and approves."

Ah, Maria! what a struggle is mine! I see the path of duty before me: honour, justice, gratitude, demand, that I should repay a conduct so exalted, so disinterested as that of Sir Charles. Maria! could I hope to make him happy—I would—I think I would comply with his wishes, the wishes of my dear affectionate mother, the dictates of my own sober reason. But this heart,—this stubborn rebellious heart, refuses its assent to the decision of my judgment. O my friend! should I conquer my reluctance; should I combat my fears; should I give that hand he so anxiously solicits, to Sir Charles, and yet be unable to render him happy,—what then would remain for your Julia?

It is too plain, that my dear parent is fast verging towards the close of a life,
spent

spent in virtue and piety, but afflicted with all the anguish that flows from the bitter fountain of ingratitude?

How necessary for our support, whilst journeying through this vale of tears, is the conviction, that it terminates in that land, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest?—Still more, Maria, that, through the dark and dismal territories of death, we pass to the regions of light, and life, and immortality?

Without this cheering prospect, what a chaos of darkness, confusion, and distress, would be, at this moment, the afflicted soul of your

JULIA GREVILLE.

LET.

LETTER LVII.

Miss Greville to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

For two days past, my beloved friend, I have been unable to hold my pen. The depression of spirits occasioned by my mother's illness, and my own perplexity, received such an addition by the arrival of your letter, as wholly overcame me.

When I read that, at the same instant I had been deploring the melancholy prospect of a separation from the best of mothers, death had threatened to deprive me also of the kindest, most endeared of friends, I was alarmed and terrified beyond measure. I thought all I loved were going to abandon me; and even now cannot enjoy my safety, (like

a wretch just escaped shipwreck), for reflecting on my late imminent danger.

It is the observation of experience, that misfortunes seldom come single. Perhaps it is ordained in mercy to mankind, that our attention should be diverted from dwelling too long on one object, that our activity (in which consists our safety) should be excited by a variety of troubles, and the tide of our affliction rendered less impetuous and destructive, by being divided into several channels.

Oh, my friend ! how do such trying situations endear to us the great truths of religion ! It is religion which stills the violence of passion, and sooths the most turbulent to peace. It is that which, in the darkest hour of adversity, illumines and cheers the soul of man. It is that which proves the real dignity of our nature, by discovering

vering to us our origin and destination. It is that alone which converts the fearful apprehension of a mortal separation, into the confirmed hope of an everlasting reunion, with all those whom our souls hold dear.

My mother and I were sitting together last night, when a servant from Sir Charles brought her the following letter.

To the Honourable Mrs Greville.

Grove.

Dear MADAM,

The time being fixed for the sale of Harwood, I made offer to purchase it from the creditors, by private bargain.

The affair was concluded this morning; and I have the satisfaction to assure you, that all demands on the estate are discharged. To a mind of such feeling
and

and rectitude as yours, I know this circumstance will afford sincere pleasure.

But as I am confident I have paid much less than the real value of the estate, permit me, dear Mrs Greville, to present you with the reversion of five thousand pounds, which would probably have accrued to you, had the affair become a public transaction; and to request, that you will continue to possess the house and furniture, as I have one in town, larger than is requisite for my family.

The pleasure of contributing to your ease and comfort, especially at this trying juncture, and of seeing Miss Greville placed in that independence, to which her birth and merit, give her an unquestionable right, will far more than repay any obligation, which you may perhaps

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imagine

imagine is conferred on you, by your devoted

and most humble servant,

CHARLES MORTIMER.

My mother put this letter into my hands: it was wet with her tears: she uttered not a word: but the language of her looks sufficiently expressed the feelings of her soul, and conveyed them to mine with a force and eloquence that mock description.

Maria! I am undone! Who can resist generosity like this? Yes: I will conquer this rebellious heart:—I will tear from thence an image which dishonours the temple it usurps; which is black with crimes of the deepest dye; perfidy, inconstancy, ingratitude. I will banish Rivers from this bosom for ever; and welcome the noble, the generous Mortimer in his place. O write, Maria!

write;

write, and strengthen my feeble resolutions. For a moment my heart exults in the consciousness of its own rectitude, and virtuous exertions. But soon the tide of nature and frailty returns; soon it sinks with apprehension, trembles with doubt, and sickens with despair. I will write no more.

JULIA GREVILLE.

LETTER LVIII.

Colonel Rivers to Captain Stanley.

Charlestown.

Heavens, Stanley! what do you tell me? You amaze, you transport me. Can I credit my senses? Is Julia Greville still unmarried? Has she seen the infamous Rochdale in his true colours? Does she repent of her injustice to him who has lived only to love her? Does she at length perceive, that happiness

and ambition are inconsistent; and resolve for ever, to abjure an error, that had so nearly ruined her peace? Stanley, could you indeed assure me of all this, she might still be mine,—I might still be happy.

But how, my friend, can we account for her strange conduct? How can a heart of the smallest delicacy, unite itself with one that can thus lightly—thus unaccountably wander? Oh that I had never been blessed with her affection, or never lived to deplore the loss of it!

A gleam of comfort suddenly breaks in on my benighted soul. I reflect, that Julia herself has never assured me of a fact, which only from her own lips I ought to have believed credible. Rochdale beloved by Julia! My friend, it cannot be. And yet with such proofs—proofs almost incontestable, what am I to think!

think! I am bewildered, amazed, distracted,—I can believe any thing, but that Julia Greville has forgotten and renounced me!

Heavens! and is there then a possibility that I may have been deceived? that I have unjustly suspected her faith, who still fondly loves me—that I have injured, by my unpardonable folly, the most blameless, the most admirable of her sex? That, at this very moment, when she, believing me perfidious and ungrateful—reproaching me with my supposed infidelity,—accusing me as the cause of her distress,—still generous, still constant, is lamenting my absence, and wishing, vainly wishing, for my return?—perhaps is already become the victim of my barbarous credulity. Defend me, Heaven! from that maddening thought.

But I am already distracted. I rave, Stanley ; it cannot, cannot be. Has she not renounced and abandoned me ? Has she not remained unmoved by my misery, deaf to my complaints, and obstinately silent, in spite of my most tender remonstrances ?

My friend, have compassion on my wretchedness. Write, I conjure you, write to your aunt, without losing a moment. Hasten, and relieve me from agonizing suspense. Learn what has so long delayed a marriage, of the certainty of which we were so well assured.

But what do I say ? If I have been once so, may I not again be deceived !

I will go instantly to Lord M—, and demand leave of absence, for which my declining health furnishes a sufficient pretext.

Though

Though urged by my physicians, to return to my native air, I have hitherto enjoined them silence on that head. Can health of body be valuable to him whose deadly sickness is seated in the heart?

But now the desire of life returns. The feeble hope rekindled by your last letter, burns every hour brighter and brighter. Yes, Stanley; on that hope, however doubtful, hangs all my earthly good.

A bare possibility has altered my firmest resolution, never to abandon my post, till I should be no longer able to maintain it. But now, what is fame, glory, interest? they vanish before the most distant hope of recovering my fondly beloved Julia!

I go then to solicit permission to return to England, of which Lord M.'s humanity

manity will make me secure. Oh, Stanley ! in what a disordered, what a distracting state is my mind ! One moment all expectation, the next sunk in despondent apprehension.

A few short weeks must terminate the dreadful conflict, and fix your friend the happiest or most wretched of mankind.

GEORGE RIVERS.

LETTER LIX.

Miss Greville to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

My dearest mother grows worse and worse. Is it possible that, in such a situation, I should think of entering into engagements, which I am wholly unable to fulfil ! Alas, Maria ! what will become of me ? I cannot describe to you the perturbation

perturbation of my mind, nor the sickness of soul, and total indifference to life, I experience, as often as I review the dismal prospects with which I am surrounded. I tremble to think of forming a connection, which might one day expose me to such killing sorrow, as that which has long preyed on the heart of the best of women; and which nothing but the aid of Heaven, joined to her superior goodness, enabled her patiently to endure. Alas, my friend! though the soul has been unshaken amid the storm of adversity, the frail, the mortal habitation, is daily yielding to its cruel violence.

Whilst my dear parent is retired to rest, I have strolled down the side of the river as far as the church-yard. It is a scene that makes me thoughtful, but never melancholy. Do I deceive myself, in believing, that the friend of my heart
will

will be pleased to read the silent language of mine, whilst ruminating beside the lowly receptacles of the dead? those humble mansions, that flatter not their vanity, but yield most important instruction to the living.

“How beautifully solemn is the scene that surrounds me! The moon, rising from behind the hill, is enlightening the dark front of the venerable abbey, which is checkered at times by the interposing branches of a single tree, bending with age, and waving slowly to the slightest breath, in a kind of lifeless sadness.

“The queen of heaven now suddenly unveils her radiance; and her bright beams glittering on the dewy graves, serve to instruct me in the boastless annals of those, who, but for these frail memorials, had long since been forgotten. Ye harmless inhabitants of this peaceful dwelling,

dwelling, how do I envy you your secure repose ! When—Oh when shall I escape from this disturbed, disorderly scene, to enjoy rest, unbroken like yours ! Contented with your native obscurity, ungente passions never rankled in your bosom, nor did the arts of seduction corrupt your heart. Ye knew not to reason, because ye had neither vice to disguise, nor vanity to indulge ; but meekly submitting yourselves to be taught of God, ye were contented with the plain path of duty, which infinite wisdom had prescribed, and thankfully accepted for your guide, that word of truth, which infinite goodness had bestowed. Happy in your native simplicity, ye were strangers to the arts of ambition and avarice, the mortifications of pride, and the feverish thirst of fame. Your humble labours were labours of love : ye have rested from them, but they shall not go unrewarded. Did you not reap the
blessed

bleſſed fruits of them, even whiſt on earth? When ye were in affliction, did not ſympathy conſole you? When in poverty, did not liberality ſuſtain you? When ye languiſhed in ſickneſs, did not the Almighty himſelf ſmooth your bed?—

What means this thrilling horror that ſteals through my veins, as I approach nearer theſe lonely manſions, where reſt the once gay companions of my youth? Is it the effect of ſuperſtitious fear, or the dreams of a diſordered imagination, that thus agitate my feeble frame, and unhinge my diſordered mind? No; it is the more forcible language of nature, that ſhrinks from the thought of diſſolution with abhorrence. It is that ſecret powerful inſtinct, that watchful centinel, appointed by the wiſe Creator, to guard the myſterious paſſage from life to death, which oppoſes the raſh deed of violence, checks the wild tyranny of ſorrow,

row, and snatches the uplifted dagger from the hand of despair.

“I will obey its dictates. Yet ere I go, let me reflect.—What have I to fear from the dissolution of this mortal frame, or the solemn pageantry of woe that surrounds me. When the frail tenement shall moulder in ruins, no longer concerned in the fate of its earthly habitation, the heavenly inhabitant shall ascend to its everlasting abode; and, disincumbered from the shackles of mortality, the immaterial and immortal spirit, possessing the glorious liberty of the sons of God, shall rejoice eternally in his presence, with whom is the fountain of life, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.

“Farewell, ye neglected, ye silent tenants of the tomb! O that I might soon sleep in peace like you! then should the cares that perplex, the hopes that seduce,

and the sorrows that pierce my heart, all vanish like a dream, and be forgotten for ever.”

On returning from my solitary ramble, I found my dear mother better than for several days past. Our conversation naturally turned on him, whose worth daily increases that esteem, which I would give the world to cherish, till it should become every thing he wishes. Maria! how astonishing is the inconsistency of our minds! how capricious the feelings of our hearts! Though the name of Rivers scarce ever passes these lips, to which I have enjoined a death-like silence on the subject; though I strive to banish him from my thoughts through the day, no sooner do I close my eyes, than my unfettered imagination hurries me to those dire scenes, where War is carrying distress and desolation; where, at this moment, sick, wounded, dying per-
haps,

haps, the guilty, yet unfortunate Rivers, deserted of every friend, abandoned of every hope, is falling a victim to that insatiate destroyer of the human race. Ah, ungrate ! unconscious of the worth of that treasure thou scornest, why, Oh why cannot I too forget ? Why cannot I lose either the memory of thy former virtues and affection, or of thy present ingratitude and perfidy ?

Sir Charles has been absent for two days, under pretence of indisposition ; but, in reality, I believe, to avoid those acknowledgments, which his late noble conduct so amply merits.—He is below, Maria, and sends to request the favour of my company. Every time we meet, I feel more and more embarrassed. Judge, if his late conduct is calculated to relieve me from the painful consciousness with which my heart is oppressed.

Q 2 — Maria !

——Maria ! at length my fate is determined, my promise irrevocably given ; and, from this moment, I renounce every thought of the unworthy Rivers, and devote every subsequent hour of my life, to the noble, the generous, the affectionate Mortimer.

On entering the parlour, my former suspicion was confirmed ; and I was ashamed to condole with him on account of indisposition, whilst his looks indicated the most perfect health. He tenderly reproached me for paying so little regard to mine ; and my mother joined him in entreating me to make an excursion as far as Mrs Clifford's, whom I had never seen since my father's death. We did so, and found her sitting with little Clara in her lap, whom she was teaching to read. She was in deep mourning, though not in a widow's habit. There was a delicacy in this conduct that pleased me much.

Her

Her spirits were so low, she could hardly speak without shedding tears ; but after sitting an hour, she grew somewhat easier, and talked of her obligations to our kindness, in the warmest, but most delicate terms. Every moment we found fresh cause to admire her fine sense, and agreeable manners. We took our leave, and on our way home, Sir Charles sent his servant with an apology to Lord Cleveland, as he had promised my mother to return to dinner. No sooner was he gone, than we engaged in a very interesting conversation ; and the weather being extremely hot, walked our horses great part of the way. On coming to a cross road, which was very rough, Sir Charles holding the reins too loose, his horse came down in a moment with such violence, that he threw his master to a considerable distance.

Sir Charles recovered himself ; but, on looking about, I saw the blood trickling

from his temples. I cannot express the horror I felt at that moment. I sprang from my horse, and flew to his assistance. He treated the accident as a trifle; took my hand, and tenderly pressing it between his, assured me, that he felt no pain, but what arose from giving me uneasiness. Whilst he was speaking, I saw him change colour, he reeled back some paces, and grew so faint, that he was forced to support himself against a tree, to prevent his falling to the ground. My apprehensions became so violent, and I trembled so much, I could hardly stand. Indeed, till that moment, I knew not how dear he was to me. I entreated him to sit down on the grass, chafed his temples with my handkerchief, and supported him in my arms. In a few minutes he recovered from the stupor occasioned by the fall, and, looking up to me with inexpressible sweetness—"O Julia! said he, Oh my angel! what would I give to owe to your love, what I receive

from

from your compassion." The affecting tone in which he uttered these words, reminded me of my situation. My arm was still round him ; I hastily withdrew it ; and, covered with blushes, was about to retire to a greater distance. He seized my hand, and pressing it to his bosom, " Unkind Julia ! cried he, will you then leave me in this situation ? Oh ! sickness, death were more supportable than this constant indifference." " I am not indifferent, Sir Charles, replied I ; my fears at this moment witness for me." " Ah, Julia ! exclaimed he with anguish, you deceive yourself : you fear for my death, but you wish not for my life." " Good Heavens, Sir Charles, cried I with emotion, surely you cannot think so. I wish your life—your happiness. I anxiously wish to be able—to—" O what, my Julia ! (gazing on me), what do you anxiously wish ?" interrupted he eagerly. " I wish, Sir Charles, to—to,"—" To make me blessed—to be my wife," exclaimed he,

he, transported. I did not retract what had just escaped me. This assent, though perhaps too rashly given, was that of my heart, as well as of my duty, Maria. The danger to which I saw Sir Charles exposed, awakened in my bosom emotions so tender, that I almost persuade myself I have been unjust, in so long accusing myself of indifference to my kind and generous benefactor. The wound he received by the fall, proved to be very slight ; and though some uneasiness remained from the violence of the shock, by the time we reached Harwood, scarce any traces of it were visible. The liveliest joy sparkled in his eyes, and diffused over his countenance a gay and most agreeable expression. On my quitting the room, he told my mother of the promise I had given him, and entreated her to join with him, in urging the early performance of it. He likewise proposed to her, to pay a visit to the hot wells at Bristol, which, he flattered himself, would
have

have a salutary effect on her constitution. At that moment I entered the room, she cheerfully consented to the plan, and holding out her arms to embrace me, "I shall now value health, my Julia—I shall now wish to live a little longer, since I am confident I shall see my beloved child happy."

On reviewing the important occurrences of this day, Maria, I strive to persuade myself I have acted aright; yet there are moments of weakness, when the conviction of reason yields but small consolation to the heart. The vigour of our minds is subject to great varieties; and, in scrutinizing any question, circumstances at one time strike our attention, which at another are wholly overlooked. Hence arises a degree of hesitation, in pronouncing on our own conduct, highly painful and perplexing; and hence, at this moment, I experience

a doubtfulness with respect to mine, which is distressing beyond description.

Write to me, dearest Maria. Remind me of the motives by which I have been influenced. Say every thing you can, consistently with truth, to soothe, console, and encourage me. You possess the power of reconciling me to myself: it is a dangerous privilege, but you will use it with discretion.

Yours ever,

JULIA GREVILLE.

LETTER LX.

Miss Herbert to Miss Greville.

London.

Yes, with truth I can applaud your conduct; I can say every thing to soothe, to encourage my friend. I can even foresee, that her fate will be as far superior

rior in happiness to the common lot of mortals, as she is superior to them in rectitude and true goodness.

Those connections, my Julia, are ever the most lasting, whose rise is spontaneous; and whose progress gradual. What is the cause that we see so few happy marriages? What, but their being hastily contracted, from motives of interest, ambition, or convenience alone. In forming this connection, the parties shew a due regard to every circumstance, but that which is the most essential of all, temper. When we select a partner, from the discovery of real merit, our self-love is agreeably soothed with the idea of our own penetration. His perfections slowly and gradually develop themselves; we have time also to discover his faults: hence arises a just and lasting judgment. Such a friendship is matured by time. The lovers adopt each others,

others sentiments, their characters in some measure change, and they become at once more amiable, and more endeared to each other, by the assimilation.

Such has been the progress of that tender and animated esteem, by which you and Sir Charles are now united. Happy may your union prove! It will, it must be happy!

I wish I could inspire you with a portion of Lucy's admirable spirits. I begged her to read to me this morning, whilst I was dressing, a favourite passage from a sermon of the Bishop of Chester, which I shall inclose in this letter, hoping that one day my amiable friend may have occasion to enforce the doctrine of this pious and elegant writer. She took up the book, and fixing her eyes on the glass, in a solemn and affected tone began—
 “Of all the works of beauty and wisdom, with which Nature hath adorned
 this

this lower creation, there is none which we contemplate with such pleasure and admiration as a fine face! especially when that face is one's own." I could not help smiling at this folly, but judged it proper to lecture her gravely on her giddiness and levity. She listened with much composure, dropped me a low curtsy, and left the room. Then returning in a minute, "I protest, my dear Maria, your serious lecture put every thing else out of my head. I have just got this morning a beautiful picture of Minerva, which more exactly resembles my idea of that goddess than any I have yet seen. Here," continued she, "judge for yourself. Tell me, have you ever beheld a countenance so serious, yet so pleasing? where the dignity that commands, and the sweetness that invites, are so charmingly blended." She held out her pocket-book, but, instead of a fine painting, I found nothing there but a mirror.

Adieu, dearest Julia. May your piety, humanity, and ingenuity, be to you unfailing springs of the purest enjoyment! When you would derive pleasure from being esteemed and beloved, in degree can give worth to these affections, think of

Your

MARIA HERBERT.

LETTER LXI.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr Belford.

Grove.

At length, my friend, my happiness is complete, and I am convinced of my folly, in shutting my eyes so long to the truth.

Julia, the gentlest, the most amiable of women—Yes, Julia loves. An accident yesterday betrayed the delightful secret,

secret, and revealed those enchanting, those lively sentiments, which unequalled modesty has hitherto concealed.

No longer, my dear Belford, am I under the painful necessity of imposing on myself continual restraint. No longer do I dread offending my Julia by the discovery of sentiments too tender to be dissembled, too ardent to be concealed. No longer does she decline hearing those artless expressions of love, which, insensibly mingling with those of pity, gain access to her gentle heart, without alarming, or too greatly agitating it. Now, now indeed, I can with propriety employ, for her and her mother, those advantages which Fortune supplies, or rather which Providence commits to our care, as means of that happiness which it thus puts in our own power to obtain, by the proper application of its gifts. Now duty demands, what inclination always

suggested; and converts acts of generosity, into expressions of gratitude.

My sweet angel still appears thoughtful and serious, but her reserve is evidently that of modesty, not indifference; and she has lost that look of depressing melancholy, which used to pain my very soul. She confides to me all her inquietudes, particularly those respecting her much loved parent; and if our mutual attachment does not partake of those transports to which youthful enthusiasm, rather than settled esteem, gives rise, it has all that tenderness and delicacy, which suits with modesty and innocence like hers, and is more agreeable to the notions I have ever entertained on that subject.

Perhaps you will think me whimsical, when I confess, that I should wish my wife to feel passion, but never to express it.

it. Sensibility is the most endearing charm of the sex; but the turbulence of passion is incompatible, in my opinion, either with that innate delicacy, or quick sense of propriety, which is inseparable from an elegant and truly virtuous female mind.

How much happiness do I promise myself in the society of so amiable, so sensible a companion! How delightful will be the task, of still farther cultivating that fine understanding and just taste, with which Heaven has distinguished this lovely young creature! and who, by the mere force of superior talents, has so far conquered all the obstacles which her late situation threw in the way of her improvement, as to appear, with singular grace and propriety, even in the most difficult circumstances. But good sense is indeed "a science fairly worth the seven." A propos on this subject. Though I do not wish to see women become learn-

ed, we certainly judge very ill, in depriving them of such branches of knowledge, as tend, by enlightening their understanding, and diversifying their studies, to divert their minds from those frivolous pursuits, which invariably corrupt their taste, dissipate their thoughts, and at last fatally influence their conduct. By being early taught a proper respect for themselves, and just notions of their own importance, women in general would become more respectable. To the want of this proper pride, and these elegant amusements, much of the misconduct, too apparent of late years in the fashionable world, may justly, I think, be attributed. It is consequently, with the utmost satisfaction, every friend to the interests of society, must observe, the successful attempts daily made to improve the mode of female education; especially by those of the sex, whose distinguished virtue bears testimony to the importance of their precepts.

My

My friend's known liberality of sentiment, assures me of the approbation of those of his

Affectionate and faithful

CHARLES MORTIMER.

LETTER LXII.

Miss Greville to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

Your approbation, so warmly expressed, my dearest Maria, has afforded me all the satisfaction your friendly heart can wish.

At present I have need of every support ; for my poor mother's weakness increases daily, and alarms me so much, that I cannot conceal my apprehensions. Sir Charles kindly endeavours to moderate them ; but he is too good, and too sensible, to attempt deceiving me with
false

false hopes, and her danger is apparent to every one who sees her. He is anxious that we should set out for Bristol without delay ; but I begin to fear this will be impracticable.

Alas, Maria ! my first and fondest hope is disappointed, that of giving happiness to my excellent parent ;—she will never live to witness mine ! Ah ! should my next be alike fruitless !—Should my endeavours to please, to render happy, the man who is about to entrust me with his peace, his honour——My head turns giddy with the thought !——Maria ! distress has made an absolute coward of me.

Sir Charles kindly proposed, that we should again visit Mrs Clifford, before leaving Harwood, that we might concert together some plan for her future establishment. We set out accordingly ;
when

when we reached the spot where Sir Charles's horse fell, "I shall never pass this way, without shuddering with horror, said I, for the danger to which I saw you exposed." "And I," replied he with vivacity, "shall regard it as the scene of the most fortunate event of my life." When we arrived at the cottage, we found Mrs Clifford, as usual, at work, but still so dejected, that it required all Sir Charles's delicacy and management to engage her in conversation. On hinting his wishes and mine, to see her agreeably settled, she said, "she could not support the idea of hanging a burden on friends so generous, and that she was resolved to go out into the world, that she might not only work for her own subsistence, but be enabled to give her little Clara proper education." She added, "that as she was extremely neat at her needle, she would prefer attending on a lady to any other occupation." Then, with a deep sigh,

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in a low voice, she added, "I believe I am qualified for a governess; but who will entrust their children to my care?" I begged her to make her mind easy, till our return from Bristol, when we would be better able to fix on a proper department for her, than the present distress of our family would permit.

As we returned home, "I wish much to know your opinion of Mrs Clifford's schemes, Miss Greville," said Sir Charles. "I beg you will tell me yours, Sir," said I. "I by no means think solitude proper for a mind in the situation of hers," replied he, "otherwise we might easily continue her in her present way of life. The bustle of the world, I should fear, would prove equally unfavourable. But if my Julia would not think me too presumptuous, and already encroaching too far on her indulgence, I could look forward a little, and point out a situation, which,

which, I think, would both be suitable and agreeable, and make her as easy as the memory of her misfortunes will permit her to be. To superintend a family so regular and happy, as that which I hope will soon reside at Harwood, would occupy, without fatiguing her; and a heart, long broken by harshness and neglect, would taste the sweetest consolation, in the approbation of so tender and indulgent a mistress." I blushed, and holding out my hand to Sir Charles, "What an enchanting art do you possess," said I, "of making one in love with goodness! But you must not take the whole merit of this plan to yourself. I am flattered to find that the same idea occurred to us both at the same moment." He seemed charmed with this confession, and the frank manner in which it was made. Surely, Maria, tenderness and delicacy like his, merit some return? Yes; I will hope, that the power I already

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dy possess, of conferring happiness on this deserving lover, will increase, not diminish, when I have bestowed on him the still more endeared name of Husband.

Though regard to decency (my father being only two months dead) prevents Sir Charles from urging the subject of our marriage, I consider myself so much in the light of a Wife, that I make no scruple to be driven about by him in an elegant little phaeton, which he presented to my mother lately, thinking the air of the coach too confined for her. How endearing are such attentions! This constant intercourse of kindness, and the thousand proofs I daily discover, of his most delicate affection, not only confirm my esteem, and enliven my gratitude, to a man whose study is to promote my enjoyment, but render his company so necessary to it, that I really tire of the hours,

hours, which regard to decorum obliges him to pass at a distance from us. He generally calls about eleven, and spends an hour with me, before my mother is ready to take an airing. It was past twelve to-day before he arrived; and I could not help becoming extremely apprehensive on account of his delay. When I heard his foot on the stairs, an involuntary movement carried me to the door of the room, which I hastily opened, crying, "Thank Heaven you are come, Sir Charles! I was really unhappy on account of your absence." "Ah, Julia! my sweetest, kindest love," cried he, clasping me to his bosom, "now, now I am blessed indeed! Now you can sympathize in the secret emotions of my soul, when you are unhappy at my absence, and rejoice at my return. O, my Julia! may it ever be thus! May my presence ever enliven with joy these eyes; and

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may that tongue often bless me with this sweet confession !”

My mother joined us, but complained of such extreme languor, that she said she would only go a very little way in the phaeton ; and Sir Charles might then return, and carry me out a longer airing.

I was struck with this proposal of my mother's, as she never before had gone abroad without me. I suspended my curiosity, however, till Sir Charles brought her home, which he did in less than an hour.

They both looked very serious. My mother complained of being much exhausted, and said, she would try to get a little sleep, in order to be able to enjoy our society at dinner, when she hoped for Sir Charles's company. “ I leave it to you, Sir,” said she, “ to acquaint
Julia

Julia with my wishes, and to enforce the duty of complying with them. She has never yet disputed my commands, and if she does so on this occasion, I shall lay the blame on my negociator, and recal the powers with which I have invested him." This she said with a smiling air, which but ill corresponded with the expression of her ghastly countenance. The moment we got into the carriage, I eagerly demanded from Sir Charles, an explanation of my mother's speech.

"I need hardly assure my dearest Julia," said he, "that her words convey the language of my fondest wishes. She intreats, that you will consent to give me your hand, before we set out for Bristol." — "How, Sir Charles!" interrupted I, "consent to marry before my father is three months dead? Surely my mother could not seriously make such a proposal: — what could possibly suggest such an

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idea?

idea?" "My love! my Julia!" said he, with a solemn and affecting tone, "this is no time for those idle forms, which your superior mind can overlook on proper occasions. You must now exert your utmost resolution, and shew me, that your fortitude is equal to your sensibility. I will not disguise with you: your mother is certainly in very great danger. "Heaven may a while prolong my life," said she this morning; "but I feel it is impossible I can recover. I have but one wish unfulfilled; that of bestowing Julia upon you, and leaving her under the protection of a husband, who, I know, will find his whole felicity in promoting that of my deserving child."

I was so greatly affected with this conversation, that I begged Sir Charles to carry me home directly, and almost repented having left my dear mother, every moment of whose company seemed

now

now unspeakably precious. Sir Charles left me at the gate, and returned home to dress. I stole softly up to my mother's apartment, whom I found awake, and greatly recruited with a soft sleep she had enjoyed during our absence. I approached her bed; and, taking hold of her hand, attempted to speak, but burst into a flood of tears.

She stretched out her feeble arms to embrace me. "My Julia! my beloved child," said she, "restrain the violence of your sorrow, which pains the heart of your mother. You have long seen me struggling with distress, to which my mind, I humbly hope, was submissive, but which was too violent for a frame like mine, long to sustain. Missed, at an early age, by a blind partiality, I bestowed the affections of a tender, ingenuous heart, on one incapable of knowing their value. Those afflictions which descend

from the hand of Heaven, and whose tendency is, by softening, to mend the heart, are to be regarded as blessings. By instructing us in our own weakness, they render us humble in ourselves, and compassionate to the frailties of others. But those which are the offspring of our own folly and presumption, overwhelm us with self-reproach, and plunge us in despondency. After being so far advanced in the toilsome journey of life, should you weep, my Julia, that I am now come in view of my quiet rest? Would you wish longer to detain me in a world, which has been embittered to me by peculiar sorrow; where reflection must for ever prove an enemy to my enjoyment; and where I can only look forward to the accumulated pains of sickness, sorrow, and a premature old age, their constant concomitant?—No, my generous, my duteous child! rather unite your thanks with mine, to that pitying God, who, in
compassion

compassion to my weakness, is abridging my trial, and will bestow on me that reward in his mercy, which I could never claim from his justice." Oh, Maria! need I tell you how my heart bled at every word uttered by this patient suffering faint! After pausing a few minutes to recover her spirits—"And now, my Julia," said she, "let me enforce the request I sent you by Sir Charles."

"Think of the situation in which you would find yourself, should Heaven call me suddenly away. Respect for a mother you fondly love, would then unite with decency; to delay your marriage for some months: and, during that period, you would be exposed to the strictures of an illiberal world;—perhaps to the insults of the most licentious, the most daring of mankind. Living alone, without fortune, without a relation to protect you.—I shudder at the bare idea. Comply then,
my

my beloved child, with mine, and the wishes of the most deserving, the most respectable of men. I shall then leave the world in perfect peace." I took hold of my dear mother's hand, which I kissed with my tears; but almost suffocated with the violence of my emotions, I could only say, "I am ready to obey you."

She again embraced me, and, assuming a more cheerful air, "Go, my love," said she, "collect your scattered spirits, and shew Sir Charles, that this act is your own, and not a constrained compliance with the request of a mother, whom you know to be incapable of imposing either severe or unreasonable commands."

I retired, to give a loose to the affliction that overwhelmed me. Though I had seen, with anguish, the declining state of my mother's health, I had never brought myself to consider her death as
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in immediate prospect. We naturally flee from what is painful ; and what can be more so, than the thought of a last separation from those we tenderly love ? To part from her at the very time when most I required her private counsel ; to engage in the cares of a family, the important duties of a wife ; to enter into a world whose dangers I had learned to fear, but not to shun ; all these prospects sunk me into such a hopeless state of dejection, that I was totally absorbed in these gloomy ideas, when I heard some one tap softly at the door. Supposing it to be Sally, I covered my face with my handkerchief, and desired her to come in ; not hearing her speak, I raised my eyes, and beheld Sir Charles, who stood motionless, on seeing my extreme distress.

He had been below for a considerable time with my mother ; and growing anxious on account of my long absence, obtained

tained her permission to come up, and fetch me.

His unexpected appearance, redoubled my emotions. He approached me with a look of the most melting compassion, mixed with a certain air of anxiety, that exceedingly affected me. "Is it possible, dearest Miss Greville," said he, "that a prospect, though melancholy in the highest degree, yet so long familiar to your thoughts, can thus unhinge all the powers of your soul?" I attempted to speak, but burst into an agony of grief. He gazed on me for some moments in silence; then, after a deep sigh, fixing his eyes earnestly on my face, "Julia!" cried he, "is it possible that you have deceived yourself, in the delightful confession you so lately made me? Is it possible that you love me not!—that you wish not to make me happy?—that you repent?" "Ah! do not wound me with these unkind suspicions,"

pitions," interrupted I. "I do wish to make you happy—I do love—but I fear—I greatly fear I am unworthy of yours."

"Most amiable, most ingenuous of women," cried Sir Charles, "banish those fears which have their foundation only in the present depressed state of your mind. O Julia! why should you fear? You cannot be unjust to an affection like mine; you cannot repay with indifference the tenderness of a man, who seeks your happiness more than life; whose whole life shall be spent in promoting it. Banish then those fears, dearest Julia, so injurious to both. Say, you will be mine; Oh! say so, with that gentle, that affectionate heart; and make me the most blessed of all the human race."

I rose; and giving him my hand, "I will be yours, Sir Charles," said I,
 "yours

“yours with my whole heart, yours for ever.”

I need not tell my friend with what transport he received this declaration. He seated himself by me; and after having soothed me into a kind of melancholy tranquillity, we returned to my mother; who, during our short meal, exerted a degree of cheerfulness highly pleasing, yet deeply affecting. I was obliged to retire immediately after dinner, to give vent to the tears which forced themselves a passage, as often as I looked at my dear mother's pale emaciated countenance.

During my absence, Sir Charles told my mother, that though her confidence in his honour might prevent her from thinking of settlements at present, he wished to consult her with regard to these matters, and would leave a sketch of his affairs, and what he proposed with respect

spect to my jointure, of which he begged to have her opinion without delay. After this, he entreated her to join with him, in persuading me to consent to our marriage, as soon as a special licence could be obtained, which he hoped might be in the course of three days. “Gracious Heaven! are three days, then, all the time allowed me to dry up those bitter tears, that have flowed so long without restraint; whose source still remains in my wounded bosom, and which I fear will never be forbidden to flow? In three short days must I erase every impression which love and grief have engraven on my inmost heart?” Ah, Maria! will it then be criminal to think of him, who has so long engrossed all my thoughts? Must I even forbear to accuse—to blame—to pity him, lest compassion should revive that love to which it is allied!

Eternal Power ! direct and guide me !
 Pity my weakness—confirm my resolution—restore my peace—and teach me—
 Oh teach me to forget !——The dye is cast, Maria ! Your Julia is the wife of Sir Charles Mortimer, and with respect to me, the name of Rivers is no more !

The messenger returned with the licence, twelve hours sooner than was expected, and arrived yesterday with the packet, just as we were sitting down to dinner. My conscious heart took alarm the moment it was delivered. I turned pale, trembled, and grew so sick, that Sir Charles was forced to bring me water, to prevent me from fainting. “ One would think, Julia,” said my mother gaily, “ that this was a death-warrant, rather than a licence, which Sir Charles has received.— Are you already seized with remorse, on account of the fetters in which you are going to bind him ?” So far
 from

from it, Madam," interrupted he, "I suspect Miss Greville is only studying how to render them more secure. But indeed she may spare herself any concern on that score. A little blind Urchin has contrived to rivet them so fast, that I am certain I shall never be able to shake them off." "I hope, Sir Charles," said I, "they will fit so easy, that you will never wish to do so."

In this manner we passed the afternoon, much more cheerfully than I could have imagined possible. In the evening, whilst my mother retired to rest, Sir Charles requested me to take a walk with him, and give him my opinion of some improvements he had lately planned. With a delicacy peculiarly his own, he diverted my mind from the gloomy subjects on which it had dwelt during the former part of the day; communicated a thousand pleasing schemes in regard to

our future œconomy ; asked my advice about several matters that he knew were interesting to me, and, by the most refined art, led my thoughts into the only channel which at that time could yield me pleasure, that of contriving means of conferring happiness on all around me.

The soothing tenderness, and perfect ease of his manner, banished restraint, and even dejection, from mine. We spent the evening together with much satisfaction ; and it was agreed, before we parted, that we should be married next day ; after which, he should bid adieu to the Grove, and become my mother's guest. Accordingly, at ten this morning, the sacred knot was tied, in presence only of my mother, my faithful Sally, and an old servant of Sir Charles's, who has been with him from a child. When the ceremony was ended, this affectionate creature came up, and kneeling whilst he
kissed

kissed his master's hand, Sir Charles presented him with mine. "May God Almighty himself prosper and bless you both," said he. "Sure I am, if your Lady be as good as she is handsome, you will be the happiest couple in Christendom. Your blessed mother looked just so thirty years ago, and would have rejoiced to see this day: but, Heaven's will be done." I thanked the good old man for his kind wishes. "I fear, James," said I, "I shall never fill the place of Lady Mortimer: but I shall always be glad to have the advice of such faithful and zealous friends of the family, as you are." The worthy creature retired with tears of gratitude in his eyes, blessing me for my condescension. Sir Charles seemed perfectly delighted with what he termed my goodness to his old Guardian; for such he had actually proved himself.

Retired to solitude and reflection, let me breathe a little, Maria, from the agitating scenes of this day. Let me consider seriously of the step I have taken.—Ah, Maria! why should I now consider of it? Is not my fate irrevocably fixed? Rather let me strengthen my feeble mind, by repeating a thousand times the motives that have determined my conduct. Rather let me appeal to that great invisible Witness, who beholds the sighs of frail nature with compassion, and records in heaven as virtue, every desire to become virtuous. Rather let me beseech Him, to whose unerring wisdom my will is submissive, to direct the future tenor of my life; and, in the discharge of my duty, to conduct me to peace and happiness.

Join in this humble earnest prayer,
Maria, with your own,

Your ever affectionate Friend.

—My

—My mother is retired to rest, and Sir Charles to write letters. I dare not trust myself with my own thoughts, and therefore take up my pen to address you. For the last time?—Yes, Maria; the last time, let it trace the name of Rivers.

Whatever may be his lot, exposed as he is at present to peculiar danger;—wherever fate may conduct him;—whatever intelligence you may receive concerning him;—henceforth, Maria, let me never, never hear the name of Rivers more.

Farewell, my best, my dearest friend. Would to heaven you were here, to conceal in your pitying bosom, the tears which force their way, in spite of my utmost endeavours to suppress them! the various distracting fears that oppress my soul! Oh, Maria! there is a gloom hangs over my mind, that suits not with the name
of

of Bride. Surely there is something in my nature, repugnant to joy!—I hear Sir Charles's voice in the parlour. I will drive these dismal presages from my heart. I will strive to meet him with that cheerful complacency, which is due to the boundless tenderness of his. Adieu, adieu.

LETTER LXIII.

Miss Herbert to Lady Mortimer.

London.

I presume not, dearest Julia, in the present state of your mind, to wish you that joy which is rarely, and never long, the lot of mortals: but, with my whole heart, I join in your pious, your reasonable prayer, that in the discharge of your duty, you may taste unfeigned happiness and peace.

Doubt not, my amiable friend, that this will indeed be your lot. Doubt not,
that

that every ingenuous feeling of your soul will be awakened, by the unremitting tenderness of the most deserving of men; and that your sincere desire to render him happy, will be attended with all that success it merits. The aid of Heaven is never wanting to us, if we are not wanting to ourselves.

Amidst a scene, at all times foreign to my taste, and now peculiarly irksome, you, my Julia, occupy all my thoughts. I tremble to think of your valuable mother's situation, and of what you must suffer, should the event be what we dread.

To watch the deathbed of a friend, is the most painful post of observation to which we can be called. Let me conjure you, not to yield to the first impulse of your affectionate heart, which I know will lead you to watch by your mother during

ring the night. A sick nurse is the most proper person for this office. But if once you take it upon yourself, your poor mother, like every invalid, will soon find, that no one can be of use to her, except the person she most loves.

I know by experience, how painful it is, to tear one's self from the bed of languishing, when conscious that our presence there can alleviate distress. But, in this state of discipline, principle must often take place of feeling ; and on no occasion ought it sooner to do so, than that in question ; since, by constant exertion, we may not only unfit ourselves for duty, but add to all the sufferings of our friend, the anguish of self-reproach.

It is natural to feel exquisite sorrow, at the prospect of such a loss as that with which you are threatened. But, ah ! my friend, with what caution ought we to
indulge

indulge a wish for aught connected with this ever-shifting scene! Utterly ignorant of what is best for us, or what would constitute our greatest possible happiness, let us neither sink under the prospect of apprehended misfortunes, nor eagerly covet imagined blessings, but cast all our cares on that Being, who alone can ordain good, or avert evil; give us the proper enjoyment of the one, and inspire us with strength to support the other.

Affure Sir Charles of my highest esteem, and very best wishes; and from the friendship that glows in your own faithful breast, judge of that by which you are for ever united to the heart of

Your

MARIA HERBERT.

LET-

LETTER LXIV.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

I have often wondered, Maria, why the heart should continue to sigh, after conscience and reason have given the clearest decision in favour of any particular action. We are told, “that the triumph of the wicked is short.” Ah, my dear friend! is not the triumph of the virtuous, too, too often so? Yet let us not vilify the sacred name of virtue: Though her triumph does not always last, it is ever succeeded by that quiet consciousness, that self-approbation, which better befits our nature, and which inward rectitude alone can inspire.

Do not chide me, if I confess, that I have often caught myself, during the last fortnight,

fortnight, repeating, with a sigh, this pathetic sentence of the admirable Madam Riccaboni: "I am astonished at the step I have taken. I tell myself every moment that I have acted rightly; I tell myself so, but I do not feel it. I seek for reasons to applaud my own conduct; I find them, but it is in my duty alone. Alas! how feeble is the consolation the heart derives from such reflections!"

My spirits for some days have been uncommonly depressed. I greatly fear, Maria, lest the Mistress, whom Sir Charles's imagination has exalted so far above the rest of her sex, should fall, in his esteem, below the level of the weakest, when he discovers those imperfections, which time will unfold in her character.

I fear he may not be able to make allowance for those little peevish or petulant humours, from which few women

are entirely exempt, whilst engrossed by domestic duties, or ruffled by domestic cares. Ah ! should he not be disposed to pity those weaknesses he never felt, how suddenly might all our hopes be blasted, and our dreams of happiness vanish !

Much affection, prudence, and delicacy, are requisite, Maria, to support with dignity the character of a Wife. In all other connections, it is sufficient, perhaps, to enter so far into the feelings of others, as to share in their joys and sorrows ; but so tender, so lively ought that sympathy to be, which is the soul of wedded love, that we ought to make every sentiment of a husband's our own ; catch the prevailing tone of his mind ; and not only meet him at all times with complacency, but even check our officious zeal to please, when silence seems more conformable to his humour. We should constrain, on such occasions, our overflowing affection,

to

to wear the calmer, quieter semblance of friendship.

I was extremely shocked lately, by the behaviour of a couple, who made, some years ago, what is called a love-marriage; who are esteemed people of worth by the world, but, by giving way to passion and humour, have lost for each other all respect and complaisance, and, by their contemptuous manner, stern looks, and harsh expressions, plant daggers in each others bosoms.

Maria! is it possible—is it really possible, that two people, who once tenderly and truly loved, can, in the course of a few fleeting years, become so entirely indifferent to each others happiness; so lost to all sense of delicacy and propriety, as to shew, not only coldness, but contempt for each other, in the presence too of strangers? I trust it is impossible. They have

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doubtless

doubtless mistaken, for that generous, that endearing affection, some sudden gust of inclination, which a moment dissipates ;—the dreams of youthful fancy, or the pictures of wild imagination. I trust and believe, that, on no occasion whatever, Sir Charles or I could thus wound the pride and delicacy of each others affection. Conscious of our own imperfections, I hope we will ever be ready to make allowance for those frailties that are natural, and those errors that are involuntary.

Whether the many interesting, and often agitating conversations my dear mother has lately had with us, have affected her health, I know not ; but every hour the lamp of life, which has long burned dimly, waxes more and more feeble. In every moment of ease, she expresses her perfect approbation of my conduct ; enumerates the virtues of Sir Charles ;

Charles ; and assures me, that she will now quit the world, not only with resignation, but comfort, since she leaves me under the protection of so estimable a husband.

If any thing could sooth or comfort me, in the prospect of such a loss, it would be the heart-felt sympathy, and endearing attentions of Sir Charles. He watches by the bed of my dying parent ; he procures her every relief of which her present situation can admit ; he gently wipes away the tears which swell into my eyes, as often as I behold the affecting spectacle of my dear mother supported in his arms, and receiving every cordial from his hand ; and pressing me to his bosom, whilst I hang over the two most dear to my heart, he assures my loved parent, that the peace, the happiness of her darling child, shall be his unceasing care.

Oh, Maria ! there is a tender pleasure mingles with these solemn scenes, that almost teaches me to forget their bitterness.

In continuation :

It is over, my dear Maria ! The painful struggle is over, and my blessed parent sleeps in peace. I would give you the melancholy particulars, but the kindest, best of men, insists on my laying down my pen. Ah ! how ungrateful were I, could I dispute any command of his !

LETTER LXV.

Miss Herbert to Lady Mortimer.

London.

This moment the melancholy, though expected tidings of your mother's death, have reached me. O why am I not near
to

to offer you the only consolation of which grief like yours, at once reasonable and extreme, can admit? The consolation of silent sympathy, and mingling tears!

Amidst your natural, your pious sorrow, for the loss of so inestimable a friend, let me remind my Julia, that, at her advanced years, protracted life is often but protracted sorrow: that though one source of comfort is withdrawn, innumerable yet remain. After having long possessed many valuable blessings, shall we repine, when restoring one to him from whom we have received all? Did we truly love God, we would not receive his correction with repugnance: for when we love, we enter into the sentiments of the beloved object, approve whatever he does, and receive his reproofs without repining.

A principal source of our impatience under our sufferings, is that inexcusable ingratitude, by which we feel much more sensibly those chastisements with which we are sometimes visited, than those blessings which are continually poured upon our heads.

The grief occasioned by the former, stifles that joy and satisfaction which the possession of the latter ought to supply. This ingratitude is the more unpardonable, that we deserve the chastisements, but are wholly unworthy of the blessings.

These general observations, however, are by no means applicable to my ingenuous friend. She is abundantly disposed to view, with becoming thankfulness, every blessing in her lot. May they daily increase; and whilst time shall add to their number and value, may it gently
steal

steal away every grief that oppresses, and care that disquiets her heart ! So prays fervently

Her unalterable friend,

MARIA HERBERT.

LETTER LXVI.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

For some days past, Maria, I have been too much indisposed to think of writing. Sir Charles having gone abroad on particular business, I resume my pen, to indulge the tender sorrows of my heart, by repeating to you the last affecting interview with my dear departed mother.

The first week after our marriage, she became so weak, that we hardly ever left her. One evening, having observed some very alarming symptoms, we were resolved

ved to sit by her during the night. She insisted, however, so earnestly on our retiring to our own apartment, that we did so, but had hardly left her, when Sally came hastily into my closet, and bursting into tears, told me, that my mother was in a fit. I flew to her bedside, and found her just recovering from it.

“Do not be alarmed, my dearest Julia,” said she, in a feeble voice: “this is a gentle summons; and, thank God, I am ready to obey the call.”

On seeing Sir Charles approach, she took hold of his hand, and joining it with mine, “My beloved, deserving children,” said she, “may the blessing of a fond, a dying mother, be your portion! May the God whom I love, and have endeavoured to serve, be your God and your guide for ever! I grieve that the first days of your union should be cloud-
ed

ed with sorrow ; but scenes like this are needful to all. This awful hour awaits each of the human race. Sorrow has been my portion through life ; but, thanks to God, comfort and peace have visited the close of it."

We continued with her the remainder of the night, great part of which she spent in soft sleep. She often fixed her eyes, first on me, and then on Sir Charles, and clasping her hands in attitude of devotion, seemed to be recommending us to the favour of Heaven. Whenever she awaked, she appeared to be quite sensible, but could not speak, and at six in the morning expired without a pang. Oh, Maria ! may her prayers be heard ! May her exemplary life, and pious instructions, have their full effect on her afflicted daughter !—But, if it is the will of Heaven, may I never be called to sustain trials like hers !

The

The moment she expired, Sir Charles gently raised me from the bed, and conveyed me to my own apartment ; where, with that refined delicacy which guides all his actions, he left me to indulge my sorrows alone, during the first moments of extreme affliction, “ Do not suppress the violence of your emotions, my beloved Julia,” said he, “ they will relieve your heart. Sacred be the sorrows of piety and affection like yours.”

He returned in half an hour, and finding me extremely feverish, insisted on my going to bed, whilst, unknown to me, he sent for a physician. My complaints were merely the effects of fatigue and agitation of spirits. But the extreme concern they awakened in the bosom of my affectionate husband, excited in mine a sympathetic softness, which I never before experienced. Yes, Maria ! it is the wish of my heart, it shall be the study of
my

my life, to repay such matchless tenderness, and to render him truly happy.

As I have a slight cough, and at times an excessive languor and depression of spirits, Sir Charles insists on making our proposed jaunt to Bristol. The preparations necessary for it will prevent me from writing for some days; but you may depend on hearing from me as soon as we are settled. Adieu, dearest, best of friends. I am yours in sincerity,

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER LXVII.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr Belford.

Bristol hot Wells.

I thank my dear friend for entering so warmly into all my concerns, and for sharing in my present felicity, in a manner that cannot fail to endear it. You

say justly, it was not in the gay world I was to expect a companion suited to my taste ; and I must think myself highly favoured of Heaven, in being directed to the only object capable of engaging my whole heart, and rendering me completely happy.

Oh Belford ! I am indeed happy ; happy beyond my most sanguine expectation, and far beyond my desert. My lovely wife is all that is sweet and engaging in the softer sex, and at the same time possesses an understanding that would do honour to the most distinguished of ours. I admire her superior talents ; but I revere, almost adore that charming modesty and ingenuity, which exalts her, in my opinion, far above all the women I have ever known.

The blind adoration of the lover, and the assumed charms of the mistress, too often

often vanish at the same instant. For the husband of Julia it has been reserved, to discover ten thousand real beauties, and graceful attractions, which, by never being displayed before marriage, acquire a double value in the eyes of him, for whom alone they were reserved. How little do women consult their own interest, or discover their knowledge of the characters of men, who think, by indiscriminately lavishing their attentions on all, that they will at least attach one to themselves. Favours that are common, become no favours at all: and a man of the least delicacy must disclaim all interest in a heart, which is hackneyed in the arts of allurements, ready to admit every pretender, and entirely ignorant of those secret, those delightful transports, that attend our first impressions of that passion, which, through life, makes the chief happiness or misery of feeling and elegant minds.

It seems determined by Heaven, “ that those who greatly love, must greatly fear.” My present felicity suffers no small abatement, from the extreme delicacy of my Julia’s health, which has undergone a most severe shock, by her mother’s death, and the various melancholy events of the last three months.

Her paleness and languor, whilst they awaken my fears, excite, at the same time, a pity, a melting softness, which I cannot express ; which binds her more closely than ever to my soul, and gives occasion for those undisguised expressions of my fondness, that both her own delicacy and mine would have restrained, had she been blessed with a more confirmed state of health. Far from being displeased with my solicitude and attentions, she receives them with a complacency the most endearing ; and expresses

a sense of their value, and of my kindness, in terms suited to her own ingenuous heart, but sometimes painful to mine.

I have brought her to this place; in hopes that she may receive benefit, both from the use of the waters, and change of objects. From the last she will, I fear, derive less advantage than I could wish; as she declines mixing with company, and often tells me, that though she would not impose the least restraint on me, she never wishes for any other society than that of her husband. I need not tell you, that hers is dearer to me than that of the whole world.

I amuse myself with a thousand agreeable schemes for next winter, when I propose bringing Julia to town, provided you will meet us there, and be her Cecif-beo for a few months; after which, we will return to Harwood, when I hope to

make you a complete convert to my plan of enjoyment: an amiable companion, an active life, and a country situation. Mean time, may your present laudable pursuit of elegant and useful knowledge, be successful; as it will add to your enjoyment of the future, in whatever circumstances that may find you. Adieu.

CHARLES MORTIMER.

LETTER LXVIII.

Miss Lucy Herbert to Mrs Helen Maria Stanley.

London.

You reproach me, dear aunt, with unkindness, and accuse me of indolence, because I have not given you a distinct account of all the places of public resort. Believe me, their quick succession leaves me at no leisure, either to impress what I
hear

hear and see distinctly on my memory, or to transmit an account of them to you.

I do not recollect having mentioned to you the lively pleasure I felt, the first time I visited Kensington Garden. It is indeed a princely one, and you can at once enjoy there, the quiet of retirement, and the enlivening influence of society. If you quit that walk to which the company resort, and retire to the opposite side, you may imagine yourself a hundred miles from London; sit under the shade of high trees, and listen, without interruption, to the bleating of sheep, and the singing of birds.

This species of music, however, is more suited to Maria's taste than mine: After having indulged her with a solitary walk there this morning, I prevailed on her to join our party in the evening to Bach's and Abel's concert; where,
if

if she would be ingenuous, I dare say she would confess she was a thousand times better entertained..

I have often feared, that when the spirits of just men and women became perfectly perfect, paradise would become extremely dull for want of variety ; but I am now convinced of my error. On this occasion, though perfect harmony was the result of the whole, each musician played a different part : separate, each was delightful ; united, all was harmonious..

I went yesterday to view St. Paul's, the magnificence of which is greatly obscured by the surrounding buildings. We ascended to the top of it by a stair, which you would not have climbed to have been placed in the papal chair. How shall I describe to you the richness and extent of the prospect? Do not think

think me profane, if I confess, I was strongly tempted to believe myself on the pinnacle of the temple, when, looking about, I found at my elbow,—not the devil indeed, but a figure very like one of his emissaries, who, with his own, and the help of his wife's eyes, was eagerly employed in overlooking all the wondrous scene, in order to try and discover—Our house at Shore-ditch !

O blessed self-importance ! what a cordial dost thou administer to the human heart ! Truly mine is indebted to thee for some of its kindest sweetest movements, and therefore I will never seek to banish thee thence.

When I looked down from the curious whispering gallery, on the little atoms who were moving below in the shape of men, I was disposed to aver, with the psalmist, “ that they were less than nothing,

thing,

thing, and vanity." But when I reflected, that the stupendous fabric I had then in view, was the work of such feeble hands as theirs, I could hardly forbear exclaiming with him on another occasion, "Thou hast made man a little lower than the angels!"

I believe, my dear aunt, the truth lies, as commonly, between the two extremes.

From a desert, such as London now is, you can expect no news, but such as relates to myself; since, except a few relations, (and these we do not always rank in the list of interesting objects), I might as well traverse the wilds of Abyssinia as the Park, for a subject.

Our plans have been sadly deranged this week, by one of the horses falling lame. My good father, with the skill of

a philosopher, and the confidence of a Christian, purchased one yesterday, from a celebrated jockey ; but, on putting him into the carriage, Will perceived at one glance, that he was blind of both eyes. Bating this misfortune, he seems a beast of considerable merit, and uses all his legs at once, which his predecessor only did occasionally. I ventured to rally my father on his skill in horse-flesh ; but I found it was too delicate a point to be touched upon. We are never so ready to commit two errors, as when we have committed one. Not being able to submit to have our judgment called in question, we first become peevish, then perverse, and obstinately defend our own conduct, at the expence of forfeiting the good opinion of others.

Tell me, my dear aunt, how you contrive to support the uniform tenor of a country-life. But you are possessed of such

such a share, both of religion and philosophy, as preserves you from feeling a thousand little rubs, which disturb and vex other mortals. Would you could send me a portion of each! for, in this whirl of folly and dissipation, I have much need of a large addition to my original stock. I require none to that sincere affection, with which I am

Your dutiful and grateful niece,
 LUCY HERBERT.

LETTER LXVIII.

Mrs Helen Maria Stanley to Miss Lucy Herbert.

Stanley Farm.

Notwithstanding the hurry and bustle of public life, your present situation, my dear Lucy, will afford much room for observation and improvement. You will be more sensible of the characteristical distinctions

distinctions of mankind, in the metropolis, than among the peasantry in the villages ; where great uniformity of character and manners must necessarily prevail.

With people of solid understandings, mixing with the world tends to enlarge and improve the mind ; to teach us to allow for different modes of education, different constitutions, circumstances, and examples ; and, without sacrificing morality to manners, leads us, on proper occasions, to relax the severity of our virtue, and pardon in others, what we would deem highly culpable in ourselves. There, however, a truly benevolent mind will study to avoid every error that may have an influence on the manners of society. No person, however obscure, is without a little circle, of which he is the centre, and which relies on him for example and direction.

I am happy to find, that advancing years have served to increase my relish for the quiet of retirement, and that refined and inexplicable joy, which arises in the soul, from the contemplation of the beauties of nature.

To her sincere votaries, Nature herself seems animated with a divine spirit, which corresponds with the sentiments of ours ; or rather with which ours unites in sweetest sympathy. I never saw the sun rise, without being conscious of an elevation of mind, which excited a wish, emulative of the usefulness, activity, and benignity of that glorious luminary ; nor watched his setting rays, without dissolving in tender recollection, of some dear departed friend, whose beautiful, but transient course, had left the world dark and sorrowful ; to bewail that dismal night to which no morning succeeds ; that departure which knows no return !

When

When I ascend a lofty mountain, and survey a boundless prospect, I thus address my Maker, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" Then reflecting on his important station in the universe, and on the peculiar marks of divine favour by which he has been distinguished, I revere myself as the offspring of God; I abhor what is evil; I aspire after whatever is noble, great, and good.

When I repose on the verdant earth, and mark the toil of the emmet, or listen to the song of the grasshopper, I exult in the assurance, that the meanest of all the works of the Creator, is not overlooked in his providence; but that even the most weak and dependent, are the objects of his complacency, the subjects of his care: and above all, that the High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, not only condescends to behold with favour, the

bleſſed and the perfect in heaven, but the pious and the penitent on earth.

When I mark the ſmooth ſurface of a river, I reflect on the illuſive and treacherous ſtream of time, which, though in appearance ever preſent, ever the ſame, is changing every moment, and bearing us along in its rapid, though ſilent courſe. The falling leaves too, that float on its ſurface, remind me of the various fates of the human race. Some dance lightly along the ſilver wave; ſome are rudely obſtructed in their courſe by rocks and ſhelves; whiſt others are ſuddenly hurried down the ſtream, overwhelmed by the tide, or engulphed in the whirlpool.

Thus, in the country every object contributes either to my pleaſure or improvement. As I never loſe ſight of yours, my Lucy, permit me to warn you of an error, into which I perceive you inſenſibly ſlide.

slide. I mean that of allowing yourself in the use of scripture-phrases, on ludicrous occasions; and, for the sake of being smart, making witty allusions to the Bible.

My dear girl, every thing connected with the sacred writings ought to be carefully avoided on these occasions; the more so, that temptations to transgress in this way very frequently occur; and that nothing tends more to wear off that reverence due to religion, than this unbecoming freedom with its laws, ministers, or institutions. I know my Lucy too well, to doubt that a hint will suffice on this subject.

But it is time to have done with this sermon. Adieu then, my dear Lucy. Study every day to correct some wayward propensity, and to acquire some mental accomplishment. You will find

your toils rewarded before the close of the year. Remember that evil habits become every day worse to conquer, and good ones more difficult to be acquired. May every year bring you an increase of knowledge and virtue, the only treasures the truly wise will covet.

Your affectionate Aunt,

HELEN MARIA-STANLEY.

LETTER LXIX.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Bristol hot Wells.

There is no obligation I find more pleasure in fulfilling, than that of writing to my friend. We had a very agreeable journey, and are fixed in quiet lodgings with a private family, much to my satisfaction. I may say, in the language of Rousseau, "My time this week
has

has passed very smoothly. I have been grave, but not melancholy ; peaceful, but not indolent ; pensive, yet contented." I think I should be perfectly so, could I be secure of rendering happy the husband, who tenderly, truly loves me.

After all, Maria, is it not strange, that so many of our sex should wish to form new connections, and plunge into additional cares and anxieties, in a world where distress is so inevitable ? Nothing can account for this, but the over-ruling providence of that Being who formed and placed us here, and who renders our instincts (forgive me, O Philosophy !) more powerful than our reason.

Sir Charles has given orders for several reparations at Harwood, so I fancy we shall continue here during —————

—Powerful

—Powerful Heaven, Maria! how strange is my destiny! Scarce can my trembling hand guide my pen, or convey to you the present tumultuous emotions of my heart.—Did I not say, the name of Rivers was no more!—Ah! it is revived; I fear for the utter destruction of my peace.

Whilst I was dressing for dinner, some one tapped at my door. It was Sir Charles. I desired him to come in. “I have just met most unexpectedly,” said he, “with my old schoolfellow and favourite Lord Rivers, whom I have brought to take part of our family-dinner.”

Seeing me look surprised, as I knew his Lordship was in London when we left Harwood: “I have heard, Julia,” continued he, “that this was a privilege some husbands durst not venture to take with impunity: but my love will never be

be found, either in her person or table in such a dishabille, as would make the presence of a friend unwelcome." "I hope, Sir Charles," replied I, "the presence of my best friend will always be a sufficient motive for endeavouring to set off both to the most advantage." He thanked me in the warmest manner for my complaisance; and my dress being properly adjusted, led me into the parlour, where I beheld,—O Maria! not Lord Rivers, whom I had never seen, but the well-known, long, too long remembered features of his brother.

My astonishment and confusion so entirely overpowered me, that I stood motionless as a statue. He approached, saluted me, and said something, I know not what, in the usual form of giving joy, but trembled whilst he pronounced the word happiness.

Fortunately

Fortunately Sir Charles took no notice at the time of our embarrassment; but attributing mine, as he afterwards told me, to this being my first appearance as a Wife, rallied me on my silent and awkward deportment, under my new character.

Supposing us absolute strangers, he politely took the burden of the conversation upon himself. He asked his friend a thousand questions with regard to America, his health, his voyage, &c.; to all which he gave only short and confused answers. His dejection increased every moment, and he seemed often so perplexed and embarrassed, that I could not help pitying his confusion, tho' I thought I ought to have triumphed in it. As soon as decency would permit, he arose from table, and muttering something about a prior engagement, hastily took his leave. The moment he was gone, Sir Charles
asked

asked me, whether I had ever seen Lord Rivers before? “I frequently observed him,” continued he, “fix his eyes on you, with such a mixture of sorrow and admiration as really surpris’d me. A title and fortune do not usually affect a young man with melancholy, but his former gaiety seems quite gone.” It was well for me that the length of this speech left me some moments to recover from the confusion into which I was thrown by the first part of it. “I never saw this gentleman since he became Lord Rivers,” replied I; “pray when did he succeed to the title?”

“His elder brother died about three weeks ago,” answered he, “by a fever, the consequence of a fox-chace, and subsequent debauch. Mr Rivers having received a wound in his breast at the siege of Charlestown, fell into bad health, and was advised to make trial of the Bristol waters.

waters. It is with this view he arrived this morning. We met at the coffee-room ; and after giving me these particulars, I told him, that I too had been engaged in a siege, though not so tedious as that of Troy ; that I thought myself the happiest of mortals, though I had forfeited my liberty ; and that if he would go home with me, I would immediately introduce him to my lovely Helen. I really fear," continued Sir Charles gravely, " that poor Rivers must be much worse than he will acknowledge ; for I never saw a man so entirely changed."

I need not attempt putting in language the anguish of my soul during this discourse. Happily the tears that flow for a deceased parent, conceal the pangs occasioned by a faithless lover.—Maria ! had he come home healthy, happy, gay, elate with his good fortune, I could have felt for him the contempt due to a conduct

duct like his. But to behold him sick, languishing, dejected—perhaps still loving,—Oh, Maria! let me—let me flee from that thought! there is distraction in it.

Pity my weakness, my tender, my compassionate friend. I know you will. Would to Heaven, you could teach me to abjure it! Would you could reconcile me to myself, and restore, to this wounded bosom, that peace which I fear is fled, never more to return! Adieu.

Your afflicted

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER LXX.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Bristol hot Wells.

My uneasiness increases daily. I am exposed here to continual alarms; and my apprehension, lest Sir Charles should remark the singularity of my behaviour, gives me such an air of timidity and embarrassment, whenever the name of Rivers is mentioned, that I really do not think it can long escape his observation; especially as I can never move abroad, without hazard of meeting him, whom of all the human race I wish to shun. Ah, my friend! that I should dread, to behold that face, which I have so often contemplated with pleasure! that I should tremble at the sound of that voice, which used to calm every inquietude! Cruel, ungrateful, unpitying Rivers! May'st thou

thou for ever remain a stranger to the anguish thou hast inflicted !

Gracious Heaven ! what will become of me ?—Read—O read, Maria ! and tell me what am I to do ?——Alas ! you are far from me. My mother—my dear instructress is no more ! I have no one to pity—none to advise me !——Maria, I will not see Rivers—I will leave Bristol this very night.——May Heaven direct me ! for I am almost distracted with my apprehensions.

Lord Rivers to Lady Mortimer.

My astonishment, on seeing Miss Greville the wife of Sir Charles Mortimer, could only be equalled by the misery it has occasioned me. Abandoned by my last feeble hope, life is become an intolerable burden. Before bidding you an eternal adieu, permit me, Madam, in ju-

stice to our former friendship, to converse with you a few minutes without witnesses. I have much to enquire, much to communicate.—Yet, alas ! it is now too late. Are you not—O misery ! are you not the Wife of another ?

Powerful Heaven ! dost thou permit such impious violation of vows made in thy awful presence !—Where then is thy justice ?

—Fear not, unkind Julia, that I shall ever reproach you. No : your own mind will better perform that office, when it is no longer in your power to atone for your injustice. Declining health, and an adverse climate, joined to unceasing affliction, will soon rid you of every pang connected with the presence of the much injured, unhappy, yet,—ah, Julia ! still adoring

RIVERS.

Maria !

Maria! since transcribing this letter, I am become more calm. Is it not enough to have abused my confidence, despised my tenderness, abandoned me to sorrow?—must he add insult and reproach to eternal regret? Ah! let him reap the fruits of treachery and dishonour.—What would he enquire?—what can he communicate, that can obliterate the remembrance of the past?—and what is now the past to me?—Yes, I am the Wife of Sir Charles Mortimer; the guardian of his honour and my own; and I will hold more valuable than life, the sacred deposit. Yes, my resolution is unalterable; I will never consent to see Lord Rivers more. I cannot bring myself to write to him; but surely my silence will sufficiently evince my displeasure.

Oh, Maria! friend of my secret soul! why are you not here to support me? Where is the peace that accompanies vir-

tue? What, at this dreadful moment, is conscious rectitude to me? My heart is torn by distracting passions. My feeble reason just serves to point out the horrid precipice on which I stand, but not to calm the tempest, or guide my feet to safety. Eternal Fountain of light and purity, vouchsafe to aid thy feeble creature, in this hour of danger and darkness! Let that voice which outrageous elements obey, calm these tumultuous passions, and teach them to accord with my will; which, in spite of the frailty of nature, thy mercy is inclining to what is good.

Upon second thoughts, Maria, I will write to Rivers. Not, however, to reproach him, but to prevent the possibility of his construing my silence into a consent to see him: that prospect now would be worse than death. I do not comprehend the meaning of his expressions; but I shall be at no pains to weigh them.

His

His actions sufficiently develope his character. He is unworthy of my esteem. But I will not discover to him that pity which I cannot avoid feeling for him. Surely, Maria, his bad health, depressed spirits, and a mind so ill at ease as his letter bespeaks, deserve commiseration?

Lady Mortimer to Lord Rivers.

There was a time, my Lord, when certain explanations might have been desirable, and saved me much pain. That time is past; and the retrospect of your own conduct, will sufficiently account for mine. I must therefore request my Lord, that you will take no more trouble on this subject. To avoid the necessity of refusing your visits, and returning your letters, I take this opportunity of assuring your Lordship, that neither of them will for the future be received by

JULIA MORTIMER.

Ah,

Ah, Maria ! what a stile is this ! how unlike that with which I used to address Rivers ! Though I am fixed in my resolutions, I fear I have been too harsh in expressing them. Heaven is my witness ! though I blame, despise, renounce—I would not hurt him. Too well do I know the wounds inflicted by the invenomed shafts of reproach, to give to any human heart, a pang like those mine has lately experienced : too well do I know, that, from those we have once fondly loved, unkindness becomes doubly cruel, doubly afflicting.—Unkindness ! how foreign to my nature ! how far from my thoughts ! Oh, Rivers ! though thou hast wounded this bosom in the most tender part,—perhaps mortally !—never, ah, never can I be unkind to thee !—But this theme is unhealthful to my peace : let us quit it, Maria. Your gentle heart will pity weakness you never felt, when you reflect, that it is the consequence of misery,

ry, of which, I trust, you shall never be able to form an idea. Farewell, my most amiable friend.

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER LXXI.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr Belford.

Bristol hot Wells.

With whatever reluctance, Belford, I make the mortifying confession, it is too true, that I begin at last to be convinced, that lasting happiness is unattainable on earth; and that the complaints so often repeated, both by the divine and the moralist, concerning the imperfection of all sublunary enjoyments, are neither the peevish murmurs of disappointment, nor the gloomy presages of superstition, but the sober dictates of truth—the sad convictions of experience.

In

In my last I acquainted you with my apprehensions on account of my Julia's health. Would to Heaven I could say they were removed! Alas! every day increaseth them.

Besides the paleness and lassitude I formerly mentioned, her dejection of spirits is again returned; and there is something in her whole manner—an absence—a restraint—a timidity, which I cannot put in language, and the cause of which I vainly endeavour to penetrate.

Heavens, Belford! could I have believed it possible, that after obtaining the hand of Julia Greville, I should yet be unhappy! If hope delayed makes the heart sick, hope entirely disappointed cannot fail to overwhelm it with anguish. Perhaps, with a constitution so extremely delicate, the mind may be proportionably affected, by the disorders of the body

dily

dily frame. I have a thousand apprehensions on her account, which it is impossible always to repress. When I question her about her health, she answers only by tears; and I am convinced she conceals her complaints, from the fear of distressing me. You may believe this conviction only adds tenderness to the compassion her uneasiness excites, and impatience to my anxious wishes for its removal.

From whatever cause that uneasiness proceeds, it is altogether out of my power to relieve it, as she persists in denying that she is indisposed.

Her extreme pensiveness, and love of retirement, have sometimes led me to fear, that something hangs on her mind, which she does not chuse to communicate to me. On hinting this, and gently chiding her for her reserves, she blushed excessively, and told me with her usual sweetness,

sweetness, that I might be assured she would never conceal any thing from me, which was likely to give me pleasure.

I ought to entreat your pardon, for continually harassing you with my distresses: but the comfort I derive from your sympathy, naturally impels me to seek it. I know not of what to complain, but I feel I am far from being happy. I tremble to discover my own uneasiness, lest I should augment that of my wife, with whom, for the first time, I am under the painful necessity of dissembling. —A little time, I trust, will remove this irksome restraint, and restore health to my love, and peace to her anxious husband,

And your sincere friend,

CHARLES MORTIMER.

L E T.

LETTER LXXII.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Bristol hot Wells.

I have sent the letter, Maria. I could not alter the style of it, without danger of betraying to Rivers the distressed state of my own mind, or the too tender concern which I greatly fear I am still disposed to take in his. I have just been perusing his strange mysterious letter. Maria! what can he mean by my injustice, —my violation of vows made in the presence of Heaven? Ah! has not his perfidy entirely cancelled them?—But it is ever thus with those who offend. Alike unable to vindicate their proceedings, or support self-reproach, they add injustice to cruelty, and think to lessen the blame due to themselves, by throwing part of

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that

that blame on others. How mean, how disingenuous such a conduct !

In continuation :

Alarmed with the most cruel, most frightful suspicions, agitated with contending tumultuous passions, I must fly, my friend, from a place, where I tread on snares, where I am surrounded with dangers on every side. Maria ! I am tempted, at some moments of peculiar weakness, to think I have been too hasty ; to think there is a possibility that he—that Rivers may have been betrayed—may still be—Oh Heaven !—may still be innocent.—But no : my weak heart blinds my understanding ; it is—it is impossible.

At twelve this morning, when Sir Charles usually spends an hour at the coffee-room, I was sitting at work in the parlour, when the door opened, and Lord Rivers

Rivers was announced. I rose to receive him, but was so overcome with terror and surprise, that my sight forsook me, and I staggered towards the window, against which I leaned for support. He threw himself into a chair near me. I trembled violently. After fixing his eyes steadfastly on me for some time, he clasped his hands in an agony together, and burst into tears. Never, never, Maria! shall I forget that dreadful moment.—There was something terrifying in the violence of his emotion.

After a few minutes of profound silence, again raising his eyes to me with a look of the most piercing anguish—"I have supported your unkindness, your inconstancy," said he, "but I cannot exist under the burden of your contempt.—Julia! what have I done to deserve it?—I came to demand from you an explanation of your mysterious, your cruel conduct.

duct.—I came, in spite of my former resolution, to load you with reproach.—But Oh, Heaven! what do I behold!—pale, feeble, dejected,—the image of despondent melancholy, instead of bridal joy! What am I to think?—I am alarmed—I am distracted. Eternal Power! should it be so? Ah, Julia!—too, too rash. I fear—I greatly fear, you have destroyed your own peace, whilst unjustly sacrificing mine.”

At that moment, I heard Sir Charles talking to some person in the hall. I rose from the chair on which I had sunk down during this speech; and, more dead than alive, with as much strength as I could collect, endeavoured to reach the door. Lord Rivers started up, and, with a frantic air, snatched my hand, which he eagerly kissed, and then hurried down stairs. With much difficulty I reached my own apartment. Without know-
ing

ing where I was, I threw myself on the bed, and gave a loose to the agonizing sorrows of my heart. Fortunately the person with whom Sir Charles was engaged, detained him for a few minutes. When he came up, my distress was but too visible. He instantly perceived it, and tenderly enquired after my health. "Indeed, Sir Charles," said I, "I do not think Bristol agrees with me; and as I long to be settled at home, you would make me happy, if you would think of returning immediately." "My dearest life," replied he, with kindness that pierced me to the soul, "you know I live but to make you happy. And though the house at Harwood is not yet in order for receiving company, I will write immediately to Mrs Clifford, and request the favour of her to see things put in such a way, as may accommodate us; and when there, my Julia may order matters according to her own taste.

“ But come, my love,” continued he, pressing my hand between his, “ you must not give way to this continual dejection. Could the parent you thus unceasingly deplore, behold her darling child, indulging herself in solitary grief, impairing her delicate constitution, and giving a thousand anxieties to the heart of her fond husband, it would interrupt the felicity of heaven itself. Oh, my Julia ! you cannot imagine how much I suffer from seeing the friend I esteem, so strangely, so unaccountably changed. Let me not also see the mistress of my tender affection—my companion—my wife, overwhelmed with sorrow, and insensible to my apprehensions on her account.”

Every word of this speech struck a dagger to my conscious heart. Ah, my friend, were Sir Charles less amiable, I should be less unhappy. He constantly urges me to go abroad, alledging, that retirement in-
creases

creases my dejection. Whither can I go, Maria, that I do not carry in my bosom, the arrow that poisons all my enjoyment, that has mortally wounded my peace!

Every hour increases my uneasiness, and confirms my resolution of returning home. As Sir Charles wishes to furnish Harwood in the most elegant manner, he begged me to accompany him this morning to a sale of china just arrived from India, and which was said to be remarkably beautiful. Scarce were we seated, when Lord Rivers entered. Sir Charles flew to him with the affection of an old friend, and invited him to take a chair between us. The company being numerous, engaged his attention, and prevented him from observing the extreme perplexity into which we were both thrown by this circumstance. The sale immediately commencing, Sir Charles appeared desirous of obtaining my opinion of several

veral articles he wished to purchase: but the distraction of my mind made me so inattentive and absent, that he could not help remarking it; and at the same time observing I looked very pale, anxiously enquired whether I felt any uneasiness. This unlucky observation increased my confusion; and, by drawing the eyes of Rivers upon me, covered me with blushes. I answered Sir Charles, that the room felt very hot, and, as I disliked a croud, if agreeable to him, I should wish to return home. He looked at his watch, and then recollected, that he was obliged to meet a gentleman at the coffee-room just at that hour, on particular business; “but I hope,” continued he, “Lord Rivers will have the goodness to attend you home, and make us happy, by spending the day with us.” My colour again forsook me, on mention of this proposal. After a little hesitation, he replied, fixing his eyes on me with a
look

look that seemed to claim my acknowledgment, "that he was sorry he could not accept of the kind invitation, being already engaged." "We must not then detain you," added Sir Charles, "you will scarcely have time to dress." "I shall not dine till very late," replied he, "and shall first do myself the honour to conduct Lady Mortimer home." I was so confounded, I knew not what answer to make. We set out, and Sir Charles presently left us. Neither of us uttered a word: our confusion and perplexity increased every moment. It occurring to me, that my milliner lived within a few doors, I resolved to call there. As she let lodgings, it might appear to Rivers that I was going to wait on some lady, which would prevent him from accompanying me. But should he even suspect it was a pretence for getting rid of him, any thing was more tolerable than the dreadful silence occasioned by our consciousness,
and

and the prospect of being again under the necessity of seeing him without witnesses. I told him, with a low and faltering voice, sufficient to betray the purpose I meant to conceal, that I could not think of encroaching on his time at present, and would step in before dinner, and call on a lady who lived hard by. He made no answer, but, after attending me to the door, with a heavy sigh, took his leave. I was so ill, I was obliged to beg a little hartshorn in water.

On coming home, I found Sir Charles had already returned. He expressed much surprise at my being so long of arriving; and asked me, with a look and manner peculiarly earnest, what I had done with Lord Rivers? I felt extremely embarrassed; but following my fixed resolution, of never deviating from truth, I told him, (as I had done Lord Rivers), that being unwilling to encroach on his time,

I had stept into my milliner's, to prevent him from thinking it necessary to attend me home. Sir Charles again remarked the astonishing change on the character, as well as appearance of his friend. "I am sensibly mortified," continued he, "to find a person I so highly valued, and with whom I was accustomed to share every thought, shew so little desire to renew that intimacy which afforded us so much pleasure in the earlier part of life. He behaves to me with a coldness and restraint, which I cannot possibly account for; no disgusts nor misunderstandings having ever taken place between us, and we have not met for five years past."

I was quite unable to make any reply, and the subject dropped. In spite of every endeavour to be chearful, my spirits became so exceedingly depressed, that I could hardly restrain my tears, as often as Sir Charles spoke to me. This did not
escape

escape his observation. He took hold of my hand, he expressed the most tender solicitude about my health, and pressing me to his bosom, "My Julia, my love," said he, "tell me, I conjure you tell me, does any thing give you uneasiness? is there any thing I can do to make you happy?" Quite overcome by his tenderness, I threw my arms round his neck, and hiding my tears in his bosom,—“Oh, you are too good!” exclaimed I, “I do not deserve such indulgence, indeed I do not.”—He would hear no more, but presently changed the subject.

Maria! I am often tempted to think, like Araspes, that I have two souls; one to admire, revere, esteem Sir Charles; and another to pity, to pardon, to commiserate—almost to love the unhappy, though guilty Rivers.

Sir

Sir Charles proposed carrying me out an airing in the evening. We had hardly gone a mile, when we saw Lord Rivers returning slowly home on horseback, without the slightest alteration in his dress or appearance. On seeing us, he quickened his pace, and rode hastily past the carriage, without taking any other notice of us than a slight bow. Sir Charles fixed his eyes on me for some moments, then, after a pause—"This behaviour of Rivers is so unaccountable," said he, "that I really don't know whether I ought not to demand an explanation of it?"

—"For Heaven's sake, Sir Charles," said I, (wholly thrown off my guard by this unexpected proposal), "do not take any notice of it."

Conscious of the eager and imprudent manner in which I had pronounced

these words, I threw my eyes on the ground, and remained stupified and abashed. Sir Charles seemed sensibly struck with them; immediately quitted the subject, and through the remainder of the evening, appeared thoughtful, and even dejected.

O Maria! advise me, without delay, what conduct I ought to pursue. This restraint, and continual anxiety, I am utterly unable to support. A consciousness like that of guilt, haunts me where-ever I go. The kindness of my husband, adds remorse to my inquietude; and I regard him with jealous fear, and timid apprehension, instead of tender confiding affection.

I have this moment received your consolatory letter. Forgive me, gentlest, best of friends, forgive me, for involving you in distress, which even your sympathy

thy can hardly alleviate, and for which there seems no remedy.—Yet why do I say so? The human frame cannot long support the intolerable anguish of a wounded spirit. There is a remedy—perhaps not far distant, which shall remove every affliction from the hopeless bosom of your distressed desponding friend.

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER LXXIII.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr Belford.

Bristol hot Wells.

Belford ! I am most miserable. Some secret sorrow preys upon the mind of my Julia, which she seems unable to communicate, and the cause of which I cannot divine. Were she less ingenuous, less nobly sincere, by those arts, too well known to many of her sex, she might conceal

her anguish, and impose on a husband, over whom she knows her influence is unbounded. But art is absolutely incompatible with her character; and though unable to make me the confident of her distress—perhaps unwilling to add to that she sees me suffer, she scorns, by the unnatural affectation of ease or cheerfulness, to purchase my peace, at the expence of her own ingenuity.

Most amiable, most exalted of women ! how does thy superior virtue rise in my estimation, by every new light in which thy character is placed !

To you Belford—to you the friend, the confident of all my thoughts, I will confess, that jealousy, the most tormenting of all diabolical passions, has sometimes of late found access to my heart.—Do not misunderstand me. I would as soon suspect an angel from heaven as my Julia,
of

of any thing that could in the slightest degree reflect on her honour. No, Belford ! it is of her affections alone that I am jealous. It is of that preference, so essential to the happiness of a husband, of which at times I am doubtful—alas, my friend ! which I am now almost convinced I never have possessed.

Esteem——gratitude——complacency, these are sentiments by which that heart has been actuated, which I fondly hoped I had inspired with love. That tender affection, which I have coveted as the first of blessings, has doubtless been bestowed on another, who either has been insensible of its value, or ungrateful for the inestimable gift.—A little time will better enable me to discover the reality of those circumstances on which my suspicions are founded, and consequently to give you a distinct account of the particulars. At present my thoughts are in such confu-

sion, that the task is absolutely impracticable.

When I reflect on the dislike—almost aversion, which Julia at first betrayed to the thoughts of marriage ; when I review her whole behaviour, her deep and settled melancholy, her stifled sighs, her frequent tears—that letter which caused such violent emotions in her artless bosom ; above all, the piercing anguish with which she one day exclaimed,—“ O, Sir Charles ! for your own sake, for mine, do not urge me to a step which I may forever repent.”—Belford, my friend ! it is too, too plain, the wretched Mortimer has deceived himself—has believed that heart his own, which was already in possession of another.

No grief can equal that which preys on my soul, which affords no room for complaint, and hardly admits of hope. Your sympathy,

sympathy, Belford—your sincere compassion I know will be mine.

Feeble, alas ! is the aid even these can at present afford to the wretched

CHARLES MORTIMER.

LETTER LXXIV.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Bristol hot Wells.

What, my friend, will become of your unhappy Julia ! My increasing restraint, which I cannot shake off, is perceived by my husband. I fear too, he suspects the real cause, though his unequalled delicacy prevents him from giving the most distant hints of that kind. He sighs often, but always endeavours to stifle his sighs. He really looks ill : there is a certain languor in his whole appearance that touches me to the soul. Last night he

was

was hot and restless, and started so violently at one time, that he awaked me. On my anxiously enquiring the cause, “Do not be uneasy, my love,” said he, “it is nothing but a horrid dream that frightened me.” Some time after, having dropped asleep, he muttered several things, which I could not distinctly hear. But one time he said plainly, “Yes, she loves me—she is incapable of deceit—she is virtue itself.” Again—“Ah! if it is so—Heaven knows I pity thee!”

He has several times introduced the subject of Rivers; enquired where I first saw him; how long it is since we were acquainted; and expressed much surprise on learning, that it is only three years since he was a frequent visitor at Harwood. I strove to answer all his enquiries with calmness and ease; but my heart throbbed so violently the moment he began the conversation, that my very endeavours

to

to appear composed, only increased my perturbation. I felt such a painful consciousness, that I had not courage to renew the subject of returning home; but, on his expressing great uneasiness on account of my delicate health, "I really believe Sir Charles," said I, "we would be both better at home; and since you are so good as to comply with every wish I form, do not think me unreasonable, if I presume so far on your indulgence, as to entreat you will order matters so, that we may set off for Harwood to-morrow. Sally is very active," continued I, "and rather than remain longer here, I will myself assist her in preparing for our journey. I begin to think, you spoil me with care; and that if I were more active, and less indulged, I should be more stout and healthy."

Sir Charles looked astonished at the suddenness of my resolution, and the earnestness

ness with which I urged my request. But, without making any comment upon it, he went away, saying, he would send up Sally to receive my orders, and give James his without delay.

I go then to prepare for that journey, which will conduct me to the scene of my earliest happiest days. Alas! few, very few of the latter have been my portion. What will be the colour of those that remain, is only known to Heaven! I trust no voluntary offence of mine, will ever cloud their aspect with the gloomy shades of remorse or shame. Whilst we are innocent, Maria, we may be unhappy; but, without guilt, we never can be completely miserable.

Yours inviolably,

JULIA MORTIMER.

LET-

LETTER LXXV.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

I again address my beloved friend from Harwood. Every object here wears the face of contentment and peace: Oh, why does not my heart correspond with their silent, yet eloquent language!

Mrs Clifford was waiting to receive us: tears of grateful joy spoke her cordial welcome. Sir Charles, ingenious in planning little schemes for my amusement, ordered the phaeton the evening after we arrived, and drove me round the park, through which several fine walks had been cut; which being done so suddenly, and with such good taste, give to these delightful shades an air of enchantment. I
strove

strove to express the pleasure I ought to feel; but my lips and heart were at variance.—How painful is restraint, how insupportable disguise, to an open and ingenuous mind! These feelings are not more new, than hateful to mine.

Maria! I am every hour more and more miserable.—I could suffer alone, but cannot support the thought of involving others in my wretchedness. Sir Charles, the kind, the generous husband, whose whole study is to make me happy, is himself a victim to my imprudent attachment—or rather unfortunate destiny. Sometimes I think he penetrates into my very soul, pities its distresses, and approves its resolution. He gazes on me till the tears swell into his eyes, then clasping me to his bosom, repeats with energy,—“Oh, my exalted Julia! how I love, how I revere you!” At others, pensive and dejected, he labours

bours to conceal his inquietudes ; but they prey upon his heart. Every attempt to banish the appearance of melancholy, only betrays the lurking sorrow.

Every thing seems to conspire for my undoing. Seeing me looking extremely ill, Sir Charles urged me to take an airing with him in the phaeton this morning ; and, for the sake of variety, proposed going on the high road. I consented to accompany him, but my spirits were so depressed, that I could hardly speak. He supported me with his arm, spoke to me with much tenderness ; yet I thought, by his looks, he seemed to reproach me with ingratitude. He gently chid me for yielding to my affliction, and reminded me, that as his whole happiness depended on seeing me happy, I ought, for his sake, to strive to banish a dejection, which, as it had a great influence on the present weakly state of my health, might

increase, by indulgence, to a dangerous extreme. At this moment, Robert, who attended us on horseback, observing something wrong about the carriage, begged Sir Charles to stop, till he should ride on to the nearest house, and procure some assistance. A cottage, among trees, being hard by, the servant rode up to it; and having borrowed a hammer and nails, returned, with a country man, whom I presently recollected to be William, Lord Cleveland's gamekeeper, to whose hospitality I had formerly been so much indebted.

The honest clown testified equal surprise on seeing me, and begged Sir Charles to step with me to the cottage, whilst the carriage was mending, where he was sure Margery would be overjoyed to see me, and give me the best she could afford. I wished to decline honest William's invitation; but Sir Charles would
not

not permit me to remain in the chaise, and, giving me his arm, conducted me towards the house. Imagine to yourself, my dear Maria, what I felt at sight of that well known spot, and the recollection of the circumstances which first brought me acquainted with it. Indeed the effect produced by these was so violent, that I became quite sick, was seized with a fit of trembling, and fainted the moment I entered the house.

The good woman did all in her power to assist me; and on seeing me recover a little, "Good lack a day! my dear young lady," exclaimed she, "is it really you I see again in my poor cottage? Though it is three long years ago, I warrant you have not forgotten the time when you came here with young Master. But though I be his nurse, it seems I must not call him so no more, for he is grown a great Lord now. Well, I said then,

and I'll say so still, you were the sweetest, handsomest, lovingest young couple that ever my eyes beheld. Many a crown have I had from him, for carrying letters to your Ladyship. And though Master be a Lord now, were I in his place, I know what I know."

I did not even attempt to interrupt nurse in her harangue. Indeed it deprived me of power to articulate, and almost of my half recovered senses. At last, starting up in an agony of distress, I entreated Sir Charles to step, and enquire whether the carriage was ready; and took that opportunity of telling her, that I was married;—that Sir Charles was my husband;—and that she must not talk any more in that manner. She shrugged up her shoulders, and expressing the utmost surprise, added,—“Well, to be sure Sir Charles is a very handsome good-natured looking gentleman; but for all that,

that,

that, I am very sorry for my young Lord that now is ; for here was he no longer ago than yesterday, walking all about the hermitage, and hanging over the little bridge, and looking into the water, as if he had lost somewhat ; and then he came in so humbly, and caressed my little George, and gave him a guinea to buy his first coat and breeches ; and told me, “ Nurse,” says he, “ do you remember when I brought the young lady here that fell into the water ? ”—and made me talk so much about your sweet self, that I vow I thought as how you would soon be Lady Rivers; and then”——Here I got up hastily, and wishing nurse a good morning, in the utmost confusion made the best of my way to meet Sir Charles ; but the affectionate creature instantly followed me with a basin of milk, and curtsying to Sir Charles, “ I wish your Honour all happiness,” said she, “ for I’m sure there is not a sweeter young lady in Christendom.

Christendom. And for old acquaintance sake, dear Madam, I hope you will not refuse to taste a little of our milk, which you thought so nice long ago, when you and young Master were here.—But I beg pardon, as your Ladyship says, I must not talk of these things now.”

I entered the carriage, overwhelmed with confusion, and neither of us spoke a syllable all the time we took to drive home.

Ah! it is too plain, Maria, Sir Charles has suspicions, which I want courage to remove,—perhaps which I have not power to dissipate. What would have been more natural than for my husband to ask an explanation of the cottager's strange story, had he not dreaded to hear it, or apprehended that his credulity would be imposed upon, by some detestable artifice.

I could not have believed, that, with conscious innocence, it was possible to be so completely wretched, as I now feel myself.

Sir Charles behaves to me with tenderness, but it is that which is excited by compassion, not that which used to flow from esteem and admiration. Caution, suspicion, restraint, have taken place, of open unrestrained confiding affection. Maria! if I have lost his esteem—his confidence—I have then no hope remaining!

I forgot to tell you, that when we were about a mile from the Wells, we met Lord Rivers returning from his morning ride. He took off his hat, and seemed inclined to pass without speaking; but Sir Charles pulling the string, the coach stopped, and he returned. “Shall we see you soon in——shire, my Lord?” demanded he. “I suppose it will not be long before you visit the Grove.”

“My

“ My plans are not yet fixed, Sir Charles,” said he ; “ but I shall certainly do myself the honour of calling at Harwood, when I return home.”

It is evident, my friend, that Lord Rivers is already in this neighbourhood ; but if he has any humanity, any generosity remaining, he will study to avoid a person, to whom he must see his presence gives inexpressible pain. Ah, Maria ! which of us has most cause to shun seeing the other ? Surely men lose all sense of justice, in their connections with our sex, however much they value themselves on their probity, when transacting with each other. Farewell, my dearest friend ! Farewell.

JULIA MORTIMER.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.





